

Reader's digest



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PHOTOGRAPH BY
DAN WINTERS,
FEATURED IN
OUR WONDER
ESSAY



Editor's Note

“Wisdom Begins in Wonder”

SOCRATES



IN HONOR OF OUR COVER STORY, here are things that have filled me with wonder lately (in no meaningful order and not a sunset among them):

Ann Wilson, of the rock band Heart, singing Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven" at the Kennedy Center Honors. A robin building her nest, stick by stick, above our front door. Ebola workers. The 23 shades of brown at a cold New Jersey beach (we counted).

That my fourth grader Sophia still visits her third-grade teacher down the hall every day after school. Discovering that her twin sister Olivia's new friend Esther is the janitor.

People who can make people laugh.

The red that my neighbor's Japanese maple turns every October. That I love a man whose Halloween decorations fill most of our attic. Watching my mom shake the president's hand. That my 15-year-old niece doesn't curse.

This sentence from Daniel James Brown's extraordinary book *The Boys in the Boat*: "All were merged into one smoothly working machine; they were, in fact, a poem of motion, a symphony of swinging blades."

Chocolate with nuts. Mangoes. Malala Yousafzai's Nobel Peace Prize. How far a mile feels when you're running it. That in the very same day I can ache with grief, mist with gratitude, and giggle at the sun.

Make your own list. Trust me, it's a wonderful way to spend an hour.



I invite you to e-mail me at liz@rd.com and follow me at facebook.com/lizvaccariello and @LizVacc on Twitter.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MELANIE DUNE/CPI



TRAVELTEX.COM > THINGS TO DO > COWBOY



FUN FOR THE WHOLE POSSE



A CHANCE TO SAY "YIPPEE-KI-YAY!"



RANCH EXPERIENCES



CHUCK WAGON DINING



COWBOY CULTURE



SADDLE UP, PARTNER



WIDE OPEN SPACES



RODEO-OOOO!



WILDLIFE



RIDE OFF INTO THE SUNSET



FILMED ON LOCATION



WESTERN MUSEUMS



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NEW RESPECT

FOR THE

GREAT BIG STEAK

YOU'LL HAVE

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Letters

COMMENTS ON THE DEC/JAN ISSUE



From Scrooge to Santa

Charles Edward Hall and I are kindred spirits. For 20 years, I have played Santa at a party for the developmentally disabled. Many know who's really under the white beard, but for those moments, I'm Santa in their eyes and, thus, in my own. To quote a famous line, "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus." I know because for a few hours every year, I become that jolly man and get to be a hero to some truly wonderful people.

PAUL DAY, Parma, Ohio

Don't Peak in High School

I distinctly remember myself at 15 (when life is only ups and downs) crying to my mom that "these were supposed to be the best years of my life." Her response: "Who ever told you that? It's going to get much better." And she was right.

MICHELLE LUA, Rohnert Park, California

Life in These United States

It makes me sad when technology gets a blanket bad rap. Just like any other communication we've developed over time, it simply provides

us with a new venue through which to be ourselves: good, bad, thoughtless, thoughtful, vain, and charitable.

L. M., via e-mail

Operation: Store Return

This was one of the funniest articles I have ever read. I laughed out loud as I remembered going through exactly what the author went through. My sister and I would run and hide when our mother would go to a store to complain or exchange. The woman had no shame!

BONNIE WISER, Carlisle, Pennsylvania

Gifts for the Person Who's Got You Stumped

Having read the book *Unbroken* and recommended it to everyone I know, I was pleased to see it featured in your gift guide. However, I was sorry you recommended it for "him." The book was written by a woman, the movie was produced by a woman, and it was given to me, a woman, by my stepmother. It should be recommended reading for everyone.

BARBARA COYNE, *Miramar Beach, Florida*

Saving Bärle, the Circus Bear

Tears pricked my eyes as I read about Bärle. One would hope we'd learned our lesson, but I see ads for circuses, with their chained elephants and caged tigers, and I realize it's still going on. It's time to allow wildlife to be just that—wild. B. M., *via e-mail*

The Day I Started Lying to Ruth

My mother died of cancer last year. Watching her die was not nearly as hard as answering, "Yes," when she looked up at me and asked, "Am I going to die?" That simple answer gave us a bond that I will never forget.

ANN ASHWORTH, *Royston, Georgia*

"She had plenty of people to do things with but nobody to do nothing with." Wow, that says it all. From someone who lost her beloved spouse to cancer, thank you for an excellent article.

KATHLEEN LAMB, *Gilroy, California*

Not My Father's Son

I stopped reading when I realized this story was written by the killer's son. I sat there and wondered why *RD* would publish something like this. I was angry and thought about writing to you and canceling my subscription. After giving myself time to calm down, I went back and read the entire article. I'm glad I did. It is a wonderful story of a family caught up in the hate that is so common today and how they managed to overcome it and go on to make the world a better place. Thank you, Zak Ebrahim.

WALT MOORE, *Brazil, Indiana*

Diagnose This

As someone who has suffered from misdiagnoses, I appreciated this article. It is crucial that patients become informed and take an active role in their care. Don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion. It's your body. You have the right to good care.

JUDY PELOWSKI, *Red Oak, Texas*

Send letters to letters@rd.com or Letters, Reader's Digest, PO Box 6100, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1600. Include your full name, address, e-mail, and daytime phone number. We may edit letters and use them in all print and electronic media. **Contribute** Send us your 100-word true stories, jokes, and funny quotes, and if we publish one in a print edition of *Reader's Digest*, we'll pay you \$100. To submit your 100-word stories, visit rd.com/stories. To submit humor items, visit rd.com/submit, or write to us at Jokes, Box 6226, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1726. Please include your full name and address in your entry. We regret that we cannot acknowledge or return unsolicited work. **Do Business** Subscriptions, renewals, gifts, address changes, payments, account information, and inquiries: Visit rd.com/help, call 877-732-4438, or write to us at Reader's Digest, PO Box 6095, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1595.



EVERYDAY HEROES



One compassionate photographer uses
her skills to find homes for foster kids

A Lens on Adoption

BY ALYSSA JUNG

 IN DECEMBER 2012, Seattle photographer Jennifer Loomis decided she was ready to adopt a child. As she scrolled through blurry photos of children on the Northwest Adoption Exchange (NWAE) website one night, she struggled to feel a connection. “I couldn’t get a sense of who the kids were,” Jennifer says.

She e-mailed the organization that night, volunteering to photograph the kids. With 18 years of experience as a documentary and portrait photographer, Jennifer, 44, believed she could use her skills to bring out each

child’s personality. After the NWAE gratefully accepted her offer, Jennifer set up a photo shoot with five boys and two girls, ages nine to 17. To entertain the kids, Jennifer brought her dog and a trampoline, along with a makeup artist. Local businesses donated balloons and food. “I wanted to see the kids smile and laugh,” she says.

The photos were posted online in August 2013. Prospective adoptive parents Joanna Church and Sean Vaillancourt visited the website and were immediately drawn to one

COURTESY JENNIFER LOOMIS

"I wanted to show the kids' vulnerable side," says Jennifer Loomis, right. Deon, below, was adopted in October.



child, 16-year-old Deon. It was Deon's "sparkly, happy eyes," says Joanna, that encouraged the couple to pursue an adoption. They adopted Deon in October 2014.

NWAE won't disclose how many children have been adopted to date, but a spokesperson says the photos have been "an invaluable tool" in matching the kids with families.

Jennifer never did adopt, but in July 2014 she gave birth to a son. Meanwhile, she will continue photographing foster children. "Their lives depend on it," she says.



Rescue in Rising Water

BY BETH DREHER

AS DARKNESS DESCENDED one May evening in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, rain fell in sheets on the ranch-style house where the Hammonds family lived. Around 10 p.m., Mike and Michaelann Hammonds went downstairs to check the basement and found water seeping under a window along the basement's south wall. The couple began to push boxes of clothes, toys, and household items toward the center of the room.

Minutes later, without warning, the basement's west wall gave way, and a flood of cold, muddy water rushed in, engulfing the room and the couple and covering the stairs. By the time the surge ended a few seconds later, Mike and Michaelann were caught in eight feet of water, pinned in place by debris on

opposite sides of the room. They had to hold their faces just above water. The smell of natural gas permeated the room.

"Go get Don!" Mike yelled to their kids, Emma, 14, and Matthew, 13, who were standing at the top of the basement stairs. Don Molesky, 49, a long-haul trucker, and his mother, Helen, 75, lived across the street.

Don was mopping up water in his own basement when he heard the kids yelling for help at his back door. He waded with the kids across the street, where they led him to the basement stairs. When Don saw what was hap-

pening, he called to Matthew to dial 911, then ran back across the street to get a saw.



"In situations like this, you have to think on your feet," says Don Molesky, right, with John Underwood.

JOHN UNDERWOOD, 29, vice president of a development and property-management firm, had stopped his truck behind a disabled car at the flooded intersection just outside the Hammondses' home. When he got out to check on the driver, he heard a girl scream, "My parents are trapped!"

John, a retired Marine, ran toward the house. Once inside, he realized that he'd have to cut a hole in the floor to reach the couple. He sent Matthew to grab an ax from the garage.

"Where are you?" John yelled through the floor.

"Here!" Michaelann responded from an area under the front door.

John pulled up carpet and yelled out a warning to Michaelann, then swung the ax and hacked a line across the living room floor. Don returned with his circular saw, and the two men cut out a rectangular panel. John pulled back the wood and heating ducts and thrust his hand into the water. Michaelann grasped it, and John and Don pulled her out. Then Don wrapped Michaelann in

a coat, and a neighbor ushered her out of the house.

The men were dizzy from breathing the gas, but they went back for Mike, who'd been in the freezing water for about 45 minutes.

John called down to Mike, who was found in a space under the hallway between the living room and kitchen. As John and Don began to cut, three firefighters arrived; together, the five men broke through and pulled Mike to safety. "I couldn't stop saying thank you," says Mike.

Three days later, city authorities condemned the Hammondses' house. The couple didn't have flood insurance, but county officials agreed to buy the house for the amount the family owed on their mortgage. They've relocated to a furnished rental house close to their old neighborhood for the time being.

"John and Don didn't consider for a moment that their lives were in danger," Mike attests.

As for the heroes, they were simply happy to help their neighbors. Says John, "Now we're all connected." **R**

**READER
HERO**

A FRIEND TO ALL CREATURES

In August 2014, animal lover Alison Smith drove four hours to rescue a stray dog with porcupine quills in its muzzle. She has saved more than 100 abused horses and has even rescued a rooster. Please recognize Alison for all she does for creatures who have no voice.

STEPHANIE MERRILL, *Clear Lake, Minnesota*

To nominate your hero, e-mail the details and your name and location to heroes@rd.com.

VOICES & VIEWS

Department of Wit

Proverbs Gone Wild

BY TEDDY WAYNE FROM
MCSWEENEY'S INTERNET TENDENCY



TEDDY WAYNE
is a New York
Times columnist
and the author
of the novels
*The Love Song of
Jonny Valentine*
and *Kapitoil*.

IF YOU WANT SOMETHING DONE RIGHT, DO IT YOURSELF.

*[Note to intern: This works, but I'm not in love with it;
pls. revise and write up ten more for my approval—Thx, Teddy]*

A SCALDED CAT FEARS COLD WATER—and don't even think about putting Mr. Fluffers into a lukewarm bath, because he'll claw your face. Make sure to feed him twice a day, but alternate the cans; morning's on the left cabinet, night's on the right. My right. Yes. What else ... I think that's it! If there's an emergency, just call us in Thailand anytime, using your own phone.

THE WAY TO A MAN'S HEART IS THROUGH HIS STOMACH.

All right, that's it for our cardiac-surgery unit. Let's move on to neurosurgery. The way to a man's brain is also through

ILLUSTRATION BY JOE MCKENDRY (WAYNE)

his stomach. Pretty much anywhere you'll be doing invasive surgery, you're gonna want to go through the stomach. Except for gastrointestinal surgery. Go through the upper spine. Kidding! The lower spine.

IF YOU SHOOT FOR THE STARS, you'll hit the roof; do not do that, since we just repaired the roof and it was a four-month ordeal. Instead, shoot for the roof, and you'll end up hitting the first floor. We sublet that to another tenant, so it's fine. We don't even like him.

AFTER DINNER, REST FOR A WHILE; AFTER SUPPER, WALK A MILE—hold on, which one is supper? Is that lunch, or is it actually dinner? Whenever people use the word *supper*, I always think they're from some strange part of America that I've never visited, some place with pastures and barns, maybe, where everyone knows everybody else and the air smells fresh and people are honest and good. I guess I wish I lived there. I never walk after any meals.

A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF CANNOT STAND. Wait, I forgot about duplexes. Duplexes are the exact literal definition of bifurcated

housing. Argh! I can be such an idiot sometimes.

EVERY DOG HAS ITS DAY—January 12, International Dog Day. It's going to be huge this year, with a ton of fun events, prizes, minor-celebrity appearances, you name it. Follow us on Twitter @IntlDogDay!

“

*A house
divided against
itself cannot
stand. Wait ...
I forgot about
duplexes.*

THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY IS this guy Robert. He's a total jerk—*everyone* thinks so, even my own enemy, Paul, who's one of the biggest jerks I know.

APRIL IS THE CRUELEST MONTH; May seems nice but actually talks

trash behind everyone's back, including yours. I'd rather not repeat anything, but it has said some pretty cruel things about you—especially when it's drunk (which is often). All the months are creeps, when you get right down to it. Except for October. October's really cool.

ASK A STUPID QUESTION, AND YOU'LL GET A STUPID ANSWER—what does that even mean, though?

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT ... Practice makkes perfect ... Practice makesperf—damn it. I'll never get this. I'm calling it a day.



Life

IN THESE UNITED STATES



I'M AT THE LIBRARY, and for some reason, when I plug my flash drive into the computer, it doesn't show up. I keep trying, but nothing happens. As an IT major, I know I can figure this out. So I spend 15 minutes changing settings and inserting and removing the flash drive. Then a girl sitting next to me taps my shoulder and says, "You're plugging into my computer, not yours." Source: acidcow.com

I WAS CUDDLING with my girlfriend, and she said, "I love lying here with you."

"I once caught a fish, and it was five feet long and spoke Hebrew," I replied. She stared at me, confused. "That was my lie," I said.

"Oh, right. I see. Very funny," she said. She paused a moment before rolling over. "That was my lie."

From @AB1KENOBE on reddit.com

I'M AT THE AGE where I can't take anything with a grain of salt.

Submitted by comedian **MATT WOHLFARTH**

A COMMERCIAL boasted that its product could help people live pain-free in their golden years.

"Am I in my golden years?" my wife, 63, asked.

"Not at all," I assured her. "But you are yellowing fast."

DENNIS MCCLANAHAN, *Buckner, Missouri*

HUMOR 101

A few years back, a woman wanted to use the word *acorns*. What she wrote instead was *egg corns*, and ever since, linguists have had a new toy: eggcorns, words and phrases that people screw up:

- Social leopard (social leper)
- Mute point (moot point)
- Skimp milk (skimmed milk)
- Youthamism (euphemism)
- Like a bowl in a china shop (like a bull in a china shop)
- Holidays sauce (Hollandaise sauce)

Sources: the Eggcorn Database and theguardian.com

AFTER MY THREE-YEAR-OLD begged and begged, I gave in and let her attend a concert with her older sister and brother. As we took our seats, I handed programs to the kids. Following the lead of her siblings, my three-year-old opened her program and announced, "I'll have the chicken."

From gcfl.net

SLINGING MUD

Stop! Don't take that dirty car to the car wash. Let Texas artist Scott Wade turn your mud-caked back window into fine art instead.



Got some funny dirt on family and friends? It could be worth \$100. See page 7 for details, or go to rd.com/submit.

A searing retort puts a dinner companion
in his place when he asks ...

What Do Teachers Make?

BY TAYLOR MALI FROM THE BOOK
WHAT TEACHERS MAKE: IN PRAISE OF THE GREATEST JOB IN THE WORLD



TAYLOR MALI
*was a teacher
for nine
years before
becoming a
full-time poet,
lecturer,
and teaching
advocate.*

HE SAYS the problem with teachers is
*What's a kid going to learn
from someone who decided his best option in life
was to become a teacher?*

He reminds the other dinner guests that it's true
what they say about teachers:

Those who can, do; those who can't, teach.

I decide to bite my tongue instead of his
and resist the temptation to remind the dinner guests
that it's also true what they say about lawyers.

Because we're eating, after all, and this is polite conversation.

*I mean, you're a teacher, Taylor.
Be honest. What do you make?*

And I wish he hadn't done that—asked me to be honest—
because, you see, I have this policy about honesty and
ass kicking:

If you ask for it, then I have to let you have it.

You want to know what I make?

I make kids work harder than they ever thought they could.



I can make a C+ feel like a Congressional Medal of Honor
and an A- feel like a slap in the face.

*How dare you waste my time
with anything less than your very best.*

I make kids sit through 40 minutes of study hall
in absolute silence. *No, you may not work in groups.*

No, you may not ask a question.

Why won't I let you go to the bathroom?

Because you're bored.

And you don't really have to go to the bathroom, do you?

I make parents tremble in fear when I call home:

*Hi. This is Mr. Mali. I hope I haven't called at a bad time;
I just wanted to talk to you about something your son said today.
To the biggest bully in the grade, he said,
"Leave the kid alone. I still cry sometimes; don't you?
It's no big deal."
And that was the noblest act of courage I have ever seen.
I make parents see their children for who they are
and what they can be.*

You want to know what I make? I make kids wonder,
I make them question.
I make them criticize.
I make them apologize and mean it.
I make them write.
I make them read, read, read.
I make them spell *definitely beautiful, definitely beautiful, definitely beautiful*
over and over and over again until they will never misspell
either one of those words again.
I make them show all their work in math
and hide it on their final drafts in English.
I make them understand that if you've got *this (a brain)*,
then you follow *this (a heart)*,
and if someone ever tries to judge you
by what you make, you give them *this (the finger)*.

Here, let me break it down for you, so you know what I say is true:
Teachers make a *difference*.

Now what about you?



WHAT TEACHERS MAKE: IN PRAISE OF THE GREATEST JOB IN THE WORLD, COPYRIGHT © 2013 BY TAYLOR MALI,
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RUBBING THEIR NOSES IN IT

The press conference following the Puppy Bowl is so good.
Just a bunch of reporters asking, "Who's a good boy?"

 @MICHAELJHUDSON

FACES OF AMERICA

BY GLENN GLASSER

Elijah Bidasha

PALM SPRINGS,
CALIFORNIA

**What gets you out of
bed in the morning?**

"What gets me out of
bed? Waking up!"





CERTIFIED HEART HEALTHY BY THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION



CERTIFIED HEART HAPPY BY YOU



Over 40 Campbell's® Healthy Request® soups are certified heart healthy by the AHA.

Campbell's.



M'm! M'm! Good!®

While many factors affect heart disease, diets low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease.



Does a school have the right to punish a student for personal social-media posts?

The Case Of the Facebook Fracas

BY VICKI GLEMBOCKI

ONE DAY after school in early 2011, Minnesota sixth grader Riley Stratton wrote on her Facebook wall that she hated a teacher's aide at her school "because she was mean to me." She intended for only her Facebook friends to see the post, but another student told the middle school principal about it, who gave Stratton detention for being "discourteous" and instructed her to apologize to the aide. A few days later, Stratton received in-school suspension and wasn't allowed to attend a class trip for another "inappropriate comment" she'd written on Facebook.

But it didn't end there. Two months later, in March, a parent called the school to alert administrators that her

son, also a student, and Stratton had been writing sexually explicit messages to each other on Facebook. This time, Stratton was met in the office by a school counselor, another female employee of the school, and the police officer assigned to the school. The administrators demanded her password—which she gave to them—and proceeded to read and question her about her Facebook content. After Stratton was sent back to class, the counselor left a voice mail for the girl's mother, explaining what had transpired. When Stratton got home from school that day, she was "emotionally distraught"—crying, angry, and embarrassed. She didn't want to go back to school, afraid ➡➡

that the administrators would “hack” into her online accounts again.

The American Civil Liberties Union took on the case, filing a complaint in March 2012 in the Federal District Court of Minnesota. “She was posting on Facebook after school, when she was off school premises, using her own computer and Internet access,” says Stratton’s ACLU attorney, Wallace Hilke. “This was one of the most blatant violations of a student’s constitutional rights that I’d ever come across.” In punishing Stratton, according to Hilke, the school district not only “overreached” its authority but also infringed on her right to free speech and to be free of unreasonable searches and seizures.

In April, the school district filed a motion to dismiss the case, arguing

that its alleged missteps did not violate the Constitution. Under the law, administrators can intervene if the post creates a “substantial disruption at the school.” If Stratton had made the comments to a couple of friends while walking home from school, it would have been one thing, notes the district’s attorney, Timothy O’Connor. “But we have to consider how many friends from school were Riley’s ‘friends’ on Facebook,” he says. “Social media makes the situation more complicated.”

Even so, the court ruled in September 2012 that the case was “still in its infancy” and should go to trial.

*Did school administrators violate Stratton’s constitutional rights?
You be the judge.*



THE VERDICT

In March 2014, the district settled, agreeing to pay Stratton \$70,000 in damages. It also revised the school’s policies to make it clear to school officials what they can and can’t do, legally, when it comes to monitoring a student’s social media. O’Connor says the decision to settle was financial: “The fees to the district would have been astronomical.” Hilke suggests a different reason: “They were going to lose.” Both attorneys agree that it would have been a fascinating case to bring before a jury. “Schools are looking at laws for regulating student speech that existed before the digital age,” says O’Connor. “Social media is an interesting and relatively uncharted territory of the law.”



Agree? Disagree? Sound off at rd.com/judge.

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Your True Stories

IN 100 WORDS

THE SWAN

My wife, Loretta, who had terminal pancreatic cancer, received a package containing a beautiful white ceramic swan. It had cost \$100, and our bills were multiplying rapidly. “How could you do this?” I burst out. “I ordered it a long time ago. I *really* wanted it,” she replied tearfully. “It’s all right,” I said, ashamed. “I love you, Bill, and I don’t want to die,” she said. “I love you too,” I said. The darkness of my scolding turned into a bright moment of mutual love. Twenty-five years later, the swan remains. That moment is etched upon my heart. **BILL COULSON, Logan, Utah**



Abandon; Return; Redirect.” *If non-deliverable*—an incomprehensible phrase. I stood stone-faced. “My son’s in the military,” she said quietly. “You can check Redirect, then write *Chaplain to redistribute at his discretion*.” Our mother-eyes met. I nodded. Thank you.

JUDITH SPARGUR, Cody, Wyoming

ROSES FOR CHARLOTTE

When I came home after the birth of my granddaughter, I found a tattered copy of *Charlotte’s Web* on my kitchen counter, along with a rosebush in a gallon jug, cookies, and a card—gifts from my neighbors. I was puzzled until I read the note: “Thought you might want this back.” I had given them the book years ago, when their kids were young. The inside cover had my daughter’s name written in her fourth-grade cursive. My granddaughter’s name is Charlotte. And the rosebush is thriving.

LAURIE WHITMAN, La Grange Park, Illinois

KINDRED SPIRIT

They were the best cookies I’d ever baked, the ingredients more expensive than a state dinner’s, a mix of my son’s favorite recipes. I wrapped each cookie in plastic, sealed the box, affixed the customs declaration form, and presented the parcel to the postal clerk. Destination: Afghanistan. She pointed to an uncompleted section of the form. “If non-deliverable:

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¹Based on Pharmacy Times Survey among pharmacists who recommend a "bone/joint strengthener" dietary supplement, 2014-2015.

²Nielsen Scantrack XAOC Dollar Sales 52 w/ October 25, 2014.

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**#1 Pharmacist
Recommended Brand'**

#ReadyForAction

My childhood

Silverdale,
WA

...Yeah-But
(said quickly, like one word), because
I always had an excuse.

JOHN LAX

...Smell Bell,

because I used to stand at the
clothesline and smell my
blanket when Mom washed it.

MARILYN ROMMEL BOUKNIGHT

Coarsegold, CA

...Snickelfritzandheimer.
My daddy always called
me that because

**it made me
laugh.**

SEANA NICHOLS

Ogden, UT

San Bernardino, CA

...Possum Pam,

because my uncle said I climbed
on anything and everything.

PAM WILSON

**...Jimi the
Weed,**

because my uncombed hair
looked like a tumbleweed.

JIMI CARDINAL

nickname was...

...Funnybutt, because my last name was Honeycutt and

kids can be mean.

BARBARA STEELE

Romulus, MI

...Batman,
because I'm Michael Keaton.
MICHAEL L. KEATON

Pittsburgh, PA

...Little Johnny Cash,

because at age three, I memorized the lyrics to the entire *At Folsom Prison* album.

GREG STARNES

Stanley, NC

...Peedab.
My dad called me that because

I was small.

JUDI MORRIS MORTON

Prattville, AR

Fort Payne, AL

...Roo,

because I always stayed close to Grandma like I was in her pouch.

JOHNNY HILLSWORTH

Tampa, FL

👉 Go to facebook.com/readersdigest for the chance to finish the next sentence.

Jerry Seinfeld

A collection of quotes from a generation's favorite comedian



There [are] just two things I'd need to find out everything I want to know about everyone: 1) Let me see them drive; 2) let me hear them talk about marriage ... That's going to tell me exactly your relationship to the world.

Source: the *Guardian*

Stand-up comedy] is a counter to the technology boom. We live in an age of gushing information ... [and] the human voice is the opposite

of that ... We crave contact. I think it's cool and interesting and odd that one person onstage can give you that.

Source: the *Daily Mail U.K.*

You need talent, you need brains, and you need confidence. Those are the three things you need to do virtually anything. Confidence is a fascinating commodity. There's no upper limit on the usefulness of it, as long as it doesn't bleed into arrogance.

Source: *Playboy*



The advice I would give [the younger me]—or any young person—would be “Keep your head up in failure and your head down in success.”

FROM REDDIT.COM

Nobody wants the Oscars to be good ... I'm going to watch it regardless. It's just something we need to do. It's like a husband and wife occasionally are going to have a fight. That's what the Oscars are—something we ... do from time to time.

Source: the *Hollywood Reporter*

If you have something, anything, an ability of some kind, you want to use it. That, I think, is the essence of human living ... The idea is to do more in life ... Money is nice, but it's not what really makes you feel good.

Source: *Palm Beach Post*

I see these guys in Cirque du Soleil ... [and] one guy balances on the other guy. And it gets a polite round of applause. I'm like, How hard is that? Why is that guy not the most famous guy? It's so much harder than what I do.

Source: *Esquire*

The bedtime routine for my kids is like this Royal Coronation Jubilee Centennial of rinsing and plaque ... and the stuffed-animal

semicircle of emotional support. And I've gotta read eight different books. You know what my bedtime story was when I was a kid? Darkness!

Source: *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*

My three rules for living: First, bust your ass ... Second, pay attention. Learn from everything and everyone ... My third rule: Fall in love. Fall in love with your street, your tennis game ... Someone could say, “I love this fork,” and I'd think that was great.

Source: *O, the Oprah Magazine*

I'll say [to my kids], “OK, it's time for dinner.” And they go, “Oh, like I didn't already know that.” I say, “That's me; you can't do me!”

Source: *New York Times Magazine*

I read that the number one fear of the average person is [public] speaking ... Number two was death. To me, that means that, to the average person, if you were going to be at a funeral, you would rather be in the casket than doing the eulogy. **R**

Source: *Metro* (U.K.)

Points to Ponder

I HAVE BEEN in love many times, but I know now that being in love does not always mean you know how to love.

DIANE VON FURSTENBERG,
fashion designer, in her memoir
The Woman I Wanted to Be

BOTH MEN and women should feel free to be sensitive. Both men and women should feel free to be strong ... It is time that we all perceive gender on a spectrum, not as two opposing sets of ideals.

EMMA WATSON,
actress, in a speech at United Nations headquarters

SUSTAINING HOPE benefits not only you but everyone around you—even those hopeless, eye-rolling cynics who remain immune to your good cheer.

DAVID BURGE,
writer, in the book
The Seven Deadly Virtues



CHURCH IS NOT a noun. It's a verb. It can be friends gathering around a meal, talking about the things that matter most, building each other up. That's a lot bigger than 11 a.m. on Sunday.

ROB BELL,
spiritual leader, in *O, the Oprah Magazine*

WE ARE MIRRORS to each other, and we are easily wounded by finding that, in the gaze of other people, we are not quite as we would like to be.

SIMON BLACKBURN,
professor of philosophy, in *Aeon*

WHEN I WENT into space ... I felt like I had as much right to be [there] or in this universe as any speck of stardust. I was as eternal as that.

MAE JEMISON,
former astronaut, in *Fast Company*

Companies have figured out the great truth of America: If you want to do something evil, put it inside something boring. Apple could put the entire text of *Mein Kampf* inside the iTunes user agreement, and you'd just go, *Agree, agree, agree.*

JOHN OLIVER, *political satirist*, on *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*



[My mother] said, "If they can learn to say Tchaikovsky and Michelangelo and Dostoyevsky, then they can learn to say Uzoamaka."

UZOAMAKA "UZO" ADUBA, *actress*, on NPR's *Tell Me More*

IT IS SAID that we are a nation of second acts, that at this cultural moment especially, we fetishize failure, that we love nothing more than a sinner reformed. But perhaps what we love is a story about second acts.

HANNA ROSIN,
journalist, in the *New Republic*

EVERY YEAR, tens of thousands of disappointed tech workers and other professionals give up while waiting for resident visas or green cards and go home—having learned enough to start companies that compete with their former U.S. employers.

MICHAEL S. MALONE,
technology writer, in the *Wall Street Journal*

THE POWER OF influence is one of the most unique powers that you can have. It's not the power of controlling people. It's developing a certain skill of communicating what you want to accomplish so that people will follow you.

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER,
former California governor, in *Esquire*

WHEN A GROWING number of people believe that everything should be free, it's impossible to support a reference book that requires a staff of contributors and editors.

LEONARD MALTIN,
movie critic, in the 2015 (and final) edition of
Leonard Maltin's Movie Guide

I am driven by two main philosophies: Know more today about the world than I knew yesterday, and lessen the suffering of others. You'd be surprised how far that gets you.

NEIL DEGRASSE TYSON, *astrophysicist*, on reddit.com



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—trending—

The “Anti-Aging” Breakthrough Everyone Is Talking About!

“There’s no denying that something that has a chance of reducing wrinkles, tightening saggy skin, decreasing body fat, increasing lean muscle mass, strengthening bones, and boosting mood, while giving you plenty of energy, is... at the very least... irresistible.”

When the famed Dr. Oz asked his audience, “How many of you want to start feeling 20 years younger right now?” and, after referencing the SeroVital[®]-hgh clinical trial, added, “I have been searching for this from the day we started the show. I’ve been looking for ways of increasing hGH naturally because I don’t like getting the injections,” the sales of SeroVital (the patented hGH-boosting oral supplement) skyrocketed.

The belief that injections of Human Growth Hormone (hGH) may help reduce body fat, increase lean muscle mass, boost mood, heighten sex drive, get rid of wrinkles, tighten saggy skin and provide plenty of youthful energy has been, for the most part, an “underground” Hollywood thing. Even *Shape* magazine noted: “When you see a 50-year-old actress who can pass for 35, you can bet that good genes aren’t the only things responsible for her youthful glow.”

However, as attractive as hGH therapy became, the high cost of injections (about \$15,000 a year) limited the benefits of hGH therapy to the very rich and famous.

Since Dr. Oz introduced the results of the groundbreaking SeroVital study (which was presented at the prestigious Obesity Society’s international scientific meeting held in San Antonio, Texas), SeroVital was exhibited at The Academy of Women’s

Health’s 21st Annual Congress in Washington, DC and The 9th World Congress of Cosmetic Dermatology held in Athens, Greece. Even the United States Patent Office has added to the SeroVital mystique by issuing not one but **seven** U.S. Patents to protect the SeroVital formula from imitators.*

With all the extraordinary worldwide publicity surrounding SeroVital, it has become the fastest-selling, most talked about “anti-aging” compound in America.

To all of you who have used SeroVital and contributed to its overwhelming success by generously spreading the word, we at SanMedica International™ sincerely thank you. To those of you who wish to learn more about this amazing, patented formula and get all the facts, please visit SeroVital.com or call 1-800-688-5329.



SeroVital is currently available at all Ulta stores, Kohl's and select GNC locations, or directly from SanMedica International at SeroVital.com or by calling **1-800-688-5329** (use promo code **HGH292** and shipping is free!). SeroVital will soon be available at prestige retailers nationwide. A full 30-day supply costs about \$100 USD.

*SeroVital-hgh is protected by U.S. Patent Numbers 8,551,542; 8,715,752; 8,722,114; 8,734,864; 8,747,921; 8,747,922 and 8,765,195. All trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

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ART *of* LIVING

Powerful Ways to Use Body Language

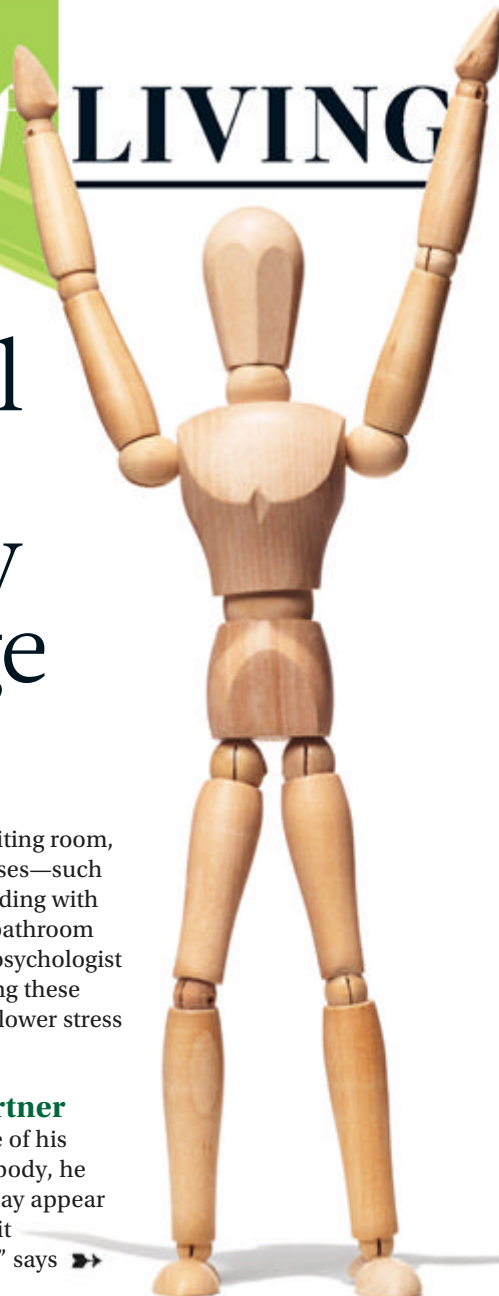
BY BETH DREHER

To Land a Job

Instead of sitting poised in the waiting room, run through a couple of power poses—such as raising your arms in a V or standing with your hands on your hips—in the bathroom or elevator. Research from social psychologist Amy Cuddy has shown that holding these postures for just two minutes can lower stress and increase feelings of power.

To Connect with Your Partner

If your significant other holds one of his wrists and raises it in front of his body, he could be feeling hurt or sad. “It may appear that he’s adjusting his watch, but it could be a sign that he’s insecure,” says ➡



body language expert Patti Wood. Offer a few comforting words or a hug so he'll lower his protective shield.

To Calm Kids

A slow voice has a soothing effect, while a loud, fast voice can stimulate anger or fear, according to a University of Maryland, Baltimore County, study. Teach your kids these benefits by playing a game with them during which you say a sentence, pausing for five seconds between words.

To Entice a Dinner Date

If you want to convey interest, do what match.com calls the Reach. Rest an arm and hand on the table with your fingers pointing to the other person. If you're not feeling the spark, sit on your hands to conceal them.

To Bond at Work

Give a high five. Making physical contact with another person for as little as 1/40th of a second can create a human bond. Touch also boosts oxytocin, which increases feelings of trust, and lowers cortisol, which reduces stress.

To Lose Weight

A study published in the *Journal of Consumer Research* showed that dieters who flexed their arm muscles when offered a choice between a candy bar and an apple were more likely to make the

healthy choice than those who didn't clench their muscles.

To Be Creative

Gesture with both hands while brainstorming. When Singapore researchers asked subjects to come up with unique uses for a building complex, those who talked out solutions with both hands had more creative ideas than those who brainstormed with just one hand.

To Speak Persuasively

A low-pitched voice inspires confidence from those around you, according to a study from McMaster University in Canada. You don't have to fake it—relax before speaking by keeping your lips together and repeating *mmm-hmm* a few times,

suggests *Forbes* body language expert Carol Kinsey Goman.

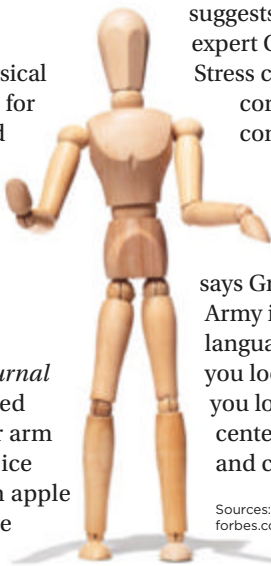
Stress can constrict your vocal cords, making your voice come out higher than usual.

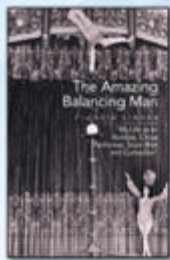
To Correct A Mistake

Mind your chin, says Greg Hartley, a former U.S. Army interrogator and a body language expert. If it's too high, you look indignant; too low, you look weak. Keep your chin centered to exude confidence and compromise.



Sources: womenshealthmag.com, forbes.com, glo.com





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8 Clever Shortcuts To Peel & Slice

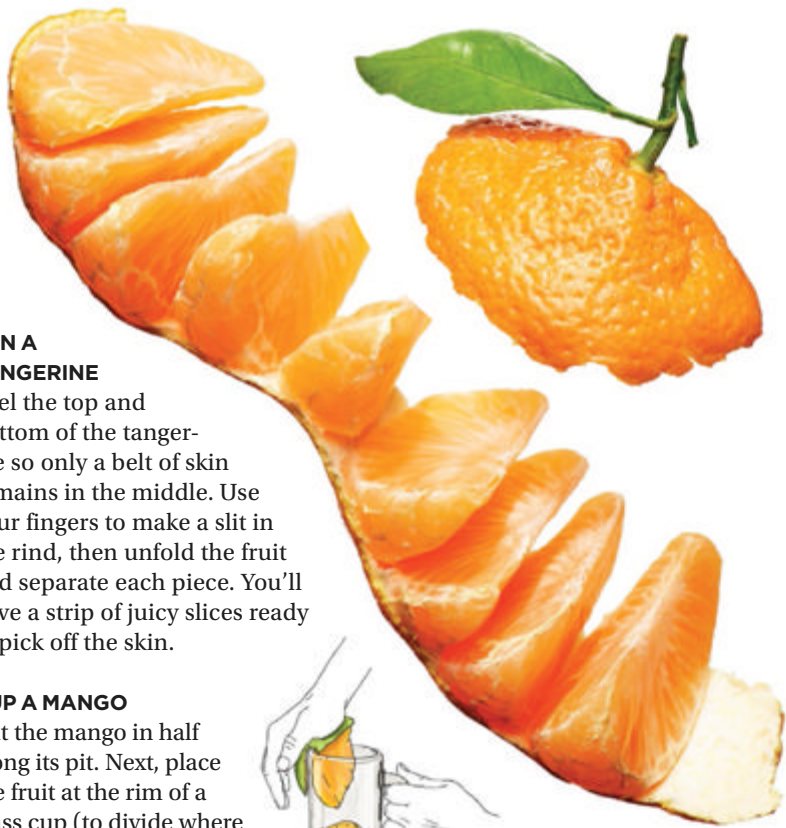
BY KELSEY KLOSS

FAN A TANGERINE

Peel the top and bottom of the tangerine so only a belt of skin remains in the middle. Use your fingers to make a slit in the rind, then unfold the fruit and separate each piece. You'll have a strip of juicy slices ready to pick off the skin.

CUP A MANGO

Cut the mango in half along its pit. Next, place the fruit at the rim of a glass cup (to divide where the skin and inner flesh meet). Push down. The finicky thin

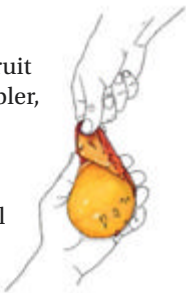


STYLIST: SARAH GUIDO FOR HALLEY RESOURCES

skin will peel off in one piece, and fresh mango will be left in the cup.

SKIN A PEACH

For a quick, naked fruit perfect for your cobbler, boil peaches for two to three minutes. Then immediately place them in a bowl of ice water (this will prevent them from cooking and loosen the skin). Once the peaches are cool, make a small slit in the skin with a knife, then peel it off with your fingers.



SLICE SPUDS IN AN INSTANT

Use your apple cutter to slice a potato. You'll have perfectly sized pieces to bake as wedges.



SHUCK CORN CLEANLY

Getting rid of that silk can be tedious business. Slice off the stalk one inch above the last row of kernels. Microwave for two to four minutes (add time to this for multiple ears). Then gently shake and squeeze the husk (wear an oven mitten—it will be hot) until the corn slides out. The steam will separate threads from the kernels, and you'll have a freshly cooked cob.



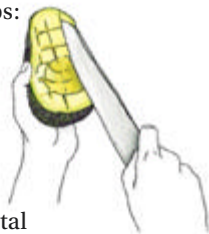
HALVE CHERRY TOMATOES FAST

Save time on your next salad: Find two similarly sized storage container lids. Place cherry tomatoes on top of one, then firmly hold the other lid on top of the tomatoes. Use a very sharp knife to slice through the entire bunch at once.



DICE AN AVOCADO

Instead of making a gooey mess, follow four easy steps: Cut the avocado in half, lengthwise. Cautiously spear the pit with the heel of your knife and remove. Slice intersecting horizontal and vertical lines—like a grid—into the flesh (but don't cut all the way through the skin). Use a spoon to remove all the cubes at once.



SPOON OUT KIWIS

Chop off each end of the kiwi, then insert a spoon between the fuzzy skin and the flesh. Slide it around the entire kiwi, then push out the tasty inner fruit.



Source: huffingtonpost.com, buzzfeed.com, thekitchn.com, simplyrecipes.com, *Bon Appétit*, livestrong.com, youtube.com, America's Test Kitchen



Sometimes One Note Will Do

BY JOE POSNANSKI FROM JOEPOSNANSKI.COM

WHEN I WAS growing up, we were not an “I love you” family. We certainly found such affection lovely. We just didn’t do it. I think saying “I love you” was viewed as overkill, not unlike saying “Don’t forget to breathe at school today.” Or maybe it was a stubborn refusal to be obvious. Love was to be seen in every hard-earned compliment, in every fair punishment, in every one of those thousand movies my mother took me to see, in the very act of my father getting up before dawn to go to the factory, and in every game of catch he found the energy to play in the afternoon.

I was thinking about all of this on Saturday at my daughters’ piano recital. I have never insisted they do anything with their free time except learn how to play the piano. I carried this from childhood. We didn’t have much back then on my dad’s salary, and we just couldn’t afford lessons.

My daughters have mostly accepted this demand with good humor. This has meant, through the years, that our

house has been filled with a few muffled complaints mixed in with slightly off-key versions of songs with names like “Up the Stairs with a Cat” and “The Mountain Bird.” This recital season, Elizabeth was playing “The Purple People Eater,” and Katie was playing “The Entertainer.” As the event got closer, they were playing their songs better and better.

The day of the recital, I was listening to Katie practice “The Entertainer,” and I noticed something. Right at the end of the song, there’s a series of notes that leads into the finish, and something sounded just a little bit off. It seemed like Katie wasn’t quite holding a note long enough. I don’t tell my kids how to play the piano, since I do not know how, but I did say, “Hey, Katie, you might want to hold that one note just a teeny bit longer.”

“Which note?” she asked.

“Well, play it again,” I said, and she played it, and I tried to pinpoint the note for her. This took longer than you might expect. She tried to hold

this note, then another note, then a different note. She started to get determined about it, and I realized that I had done something unintended—I was making her think too much just a few hours before her recital.

So I told her not to worry about it, but it was too late—she’s our persistent daughter. There’s a great experiment I heard about where they promise kids a piece of candy anytime they want but tell them that if they can hold off for 15 minutes, they can have two pieces of candy. Most kids can’t make it the 15 minutes. Katie would be able to wait five days.

She kept at it for a little while longer, until finally I said that she’d played it perfectly, and she could go to the pool. I don’t think we ever isolated that one note; I felt pretty bad for even bringing it up.

Then it was time for the recital. Katie was the first one up. She was dressed well, and she was her usual determined self. As I watched her play “The Entertainer,” all I could think was how grown-up she had become, how deeply I already missed the four- and five- and six-year-old versions of her, but also how fantastic the nine-year-old version was.



She got to the end of the song, and she reached the note we had talked about. And she held it. I mean she *held* it. She held it long enough that for an instant it broke her timing on the rest of the song. But, oh, she held that note, the one we had talked about, and then she finished the song, and she looked right at me.

And, of course, before the day was out, I told her I loved her two or three or five times. I told Elizabeth that too. I hope to tell them that 100,000 more times in their lives. But my parents were right too. You don’t have to say the words *I love you*. Sometimes one note will do. 

Eliminate Ants

... without calling an exterminator



FROM THE BOOK *100 THINGS EVERY HOMEOWNER MUST KNOW*

ID the Ant

Take a close-up photo of one of the invaders, and e-mail it to your local university extension service. (These offices provide research-based information on issues like pests. Visit nifa.usda.gov/extension to find your closest office.) The extension service can tell you the type of ant you're dealing with and where it nests. It may give you fact sheets about the ant species and maybe even some advice on getting rid of it.

Make Poison Easy to Reach

Place bait stations in areas where you've seen ants, like under the sink and along walls, to make it as likely as possible that the ants will take the toxic bait back to the nest. Expect to see more ants when you set out the bait at first. That's a good thing. It means more ants are taking the bait back to the colony, where

they'll share it with the rest of the ants, including the queen.

Don't Squish Them

After setting out the toxic bait, resist the temptation to step on the ants. They're working for you now—gathering the poison and taking it to the nest.

Erase Their Trails

Ants leave a scented trail that other ants follow. Sweeping or mopping isn't enough to eliminate the scent. Instead, mix one part vinegar with three parts water in a spray bottle, then spritz wherever you've seen ants.

Remember Your Yard

Spot treat ant hills or mounds with an outdoor insecticide. For large-scale ant problems, use an insect killer that contains bifenthrin as the active ingredient. First mow the

grass, then spray the insecticide on the entire lawn in the early morning or late afternoon, when the ants are most active.

Eliminate Easy Entry

Trim back bushes, shrubs, and trees that brush against your siding or roof. These provide a bridge for ants to reach your home. Avoid stacking firewood next to the house.

Hunt Down the Nest

For some infestations—of carpenter ants, for instance—you must get rid of the nest. How to find it: Look for damp areas such as framing or flooring that's soft and spongy (this could be the result of, say, a plumbing or roof leak). Look in attics, bathrooms, and exterior walls. When you find the nest, spray it with an insecticide labeled for indoor use.



GENIUS ITEMS TO DERAIL AN ANT INVASION

Entomologists (aka the bug experts) agree that natural remedies are not as potent as pesticides. But if you want to try toxin-free ways to get rid of the little critters, these are good options.

■ LEMONS

Squirt some lemon juice on door thresholds and windowsills. Then squeeze a wedge into any holes or cracks the ants are coming through. Finally, scatter small slices of lemon peel around any outdoor entrances. The strong acidity and smell can help keep the pests away.

■ FLOWERPOTS AND TEAKETTLES

Tired of getting stung by fire ants on your patio? Place a flowerpot upside down over the anthill, then pour boiling water through the drain hole to eliminate the insects' house.

■ HERBS AND SPICES

Pantry staples like sugar, flour, and certain seasonings can fall prey to ants. To keep your food safe, slip a bay leaf inside your storage containers. If you're concerned about the flour or sugar picking up a bay leaf flavor, tape the leaf to the inside of the canister lid. This trick works inside cabinets, too, where sachets of sage, bay, cinnamon sticks, or whole cloves will smell pleasant while discouraging ants from getting cozy.

From the book *Extraordinary Uses for Ordinary Things*



A mother marvels as her child grows and learns from a “virtual assistant”

Siri, My Son's Best Friend

BY JUDITH NEWMAN

FROM THE *NEW YORK TIMES*

JUST HOW BAD A MOTHER am I? I wondered, as I watched my 13-year-old son deep in conversation with Siri. Gus has autism, and Siri—Apple’s “intelligent personal assistant” on the iPhone—is currently his closest confidant.

Gus: “You are always asking if you can help me. Is there anything you want?”

Siri: “Thank you, but I have very few wants.”

Gus: “OK! Well, good night!”

Siri: “Ah, it’s 5:06 p.m.”

Gus: “Oh, sorry. I mean goodbye.”

Siri: “See you later!”

This is a love letter to a machine. In a world where the commonly held wisdom is that technology isolates us, it’s worth considering another side of the story.

It all began simply enough. I’d just

read an Internet list called “21 Things You Didn’t Know Your iPhone Could Do.” One of them was this: I could ask Siri, “What planes are above me right now?” and Siri would produce a list of actual flights—numbers, altitudes, angles—above my head.

I happened to be reading this when Gus was nearby. “Why would anyone need to know what planes are flying above your head?” I muttered. Gus replied, “So you know who you’re waving at, Mommy.”

When Gus discovered there was someone who would not just find information on his various obsessions but actually semi-discuss these



subjects tirelessly, he was hooked. And I was grateful. Now, when my head was about to explode if I had to have another conversation about the chance of tornadoes in Kansas City, Missouri, I could reply brightly, “Hey! Why don’t you ask Siri?”

It’s not that Gus doesn’t understand Siri’s not human. He does—intellectually. But like many autistic people I know, Gus feels that inanimate objects, while maybe not possessing souls, are worthy of our consideration. I realized this when he was eight and I got him an iPod for his birthday. He listened to it only at home, with one exception. It always went with us on our visits to the Apple Store. Finally, I asked why. “So it can visit its friends,” he said.

Gus speaks as if he has marbles in his mouth, but if he wants to get the right response from Siri, he must enunciate clearly. She is also wonderful for someone who doesn’t pick up on social cues: Siri’s responses are not entirely predictable, but they are predictably kind—even when Gus is brusque.

These practice conversations with Siri are translating into more facility with actual humans. Yesterday, I had my longest-ever conversation with him. Admittedly, it was about different species of turtles and whether I preferred the red-eared slider to the diamond-backed terrapin. This might not have been my choice of topic, but it was back and forth,

and it followed a logical trajectory.

According to the folks at SRI International, the research-and-development company where Siri began before Apple bought the technology, the next generation of virtual assistants will not just retrieve information—they will also be able to carry on more complex conversations about a person’s area of interest.

“See, that’s the wonderful thing about technology being able to help with some of these behaviors,” says William Mark, vice president for information and computing sciences at SRI. “Getting results requires a lot of repetition. Humans are not patient. Machines are very, very patient.”

Last night, as Gus was going to bed, there was this matter-of-fact exchange:

Gus: “Siri, will you marry me?”

Siri: “I’m not the marrying kind.”

Gus: “I mean, not now. I’m a kid. I mean when I’m grown-up.”

Siri: “My end user agreement does not include marriage.”

Gus: “Oh, OK.”

Gus didn’t sound too disappointed. This was useful information to have, and for me, too, since it was the first time I knew that he actually thought about marriage. He turned over to go to sleep.

Gus: “Good night, Siri. Will you sleep well tonight?”

Siri: “I don’t need much sleep, but it’s nice of you to ask.”

Very nice.



ALL IN

A Day's Work



"Then it struck me—nobody originally on the Paleo Diet lived past 35."

WHILE TAKING STOCK of our products, I read aloud the final numbers to my boss. As he entered each one into a calculator, I deleted it off my mobile device. Only after I'd finished did we realize that he had entered the numbers on his desk phone's keypad.

DAVID MARLAND, on quora.com

"MEET MY COWORKER, the Boy Who Cried ASAP."

From meetingboy.com

LOOKING FOR A JOB? Here's one posted on Craigslist: "\$40K a Year to Attend Harvard University as Me." Requirements include a 4.0 GPA in high school or a 3.5 GPA in college. Only males need apply, since, as the

listing tells us, “I have a male name.” The lucky person tapped for the gig doesn’t have to do much other than “attend all classes, pass all tests, and finish all assigned work while pretending you are me.” Don’t worry about having to actually get into the Ivy League school: “I’ve already taken care of that,” he says.

REQUEST FROM A CLIENT: “For the ad, use a stock photo of a woman or a person.”

Source: [clientsfromhell.net](#)

COLONOSCOPIES ARE important medical procedures that have saved lives. And yet they’re as popular as, well, a colonoscopy. Here are comments purportedly made by patients to physicians during their procedures.

- “Now I know how a Muppet feels!”
- “Could you write a note for my wife saying that my head is not up there?”
- “Any sign of the trapped miners, chief?”

Source: **DAVE BARRY**, in the *Miami Herald*

SCENE: Inside a Best Buy store.

Customer: Can you help me? I’m looking for a shredder.

Coworker: We have all types of shredders. What will you be shredding primarily?

Customer: Collard greens.

JESSICA SMITH, *Peachtree City, Georgia*

RELIGION IS GENERALLY a verboten topic for everyone at work, except for Larry. Recently, after he steered



LATER: Yay, We’re Closed!

Source: *The Mad World of Sign Language*

yet another conversation toward the subject, a coworker whispered to me, “That Larry—he always has to put his two saints in.”

MARK LATESSA, *Brownstown, Michigan*

SOMETIMES I LIKE TO sit my dog down for a performance review, just to remind him who’s boss.

@RMFNORD

“HAS YOUR DIET CHANGED?”

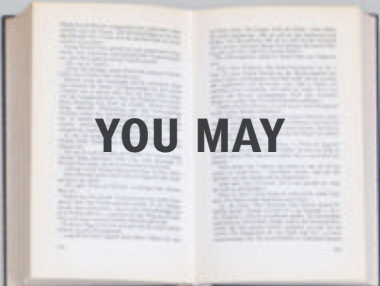
I asked an 87-year-old woman I was admitting into the hospital.

“Yes,” she said. “For Lent, I gave up whipped cream on my Jell-O, hard candy, and my two beers a night. [Pause] And look where it’s gotten me.”

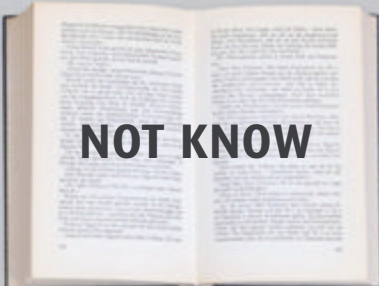
L. K., *via Internet*

Anything funny happen to you at work lately? It could be worth \$100. See page 7 for details or go to [rd.com/submit](#).

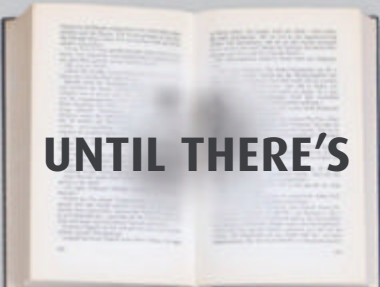
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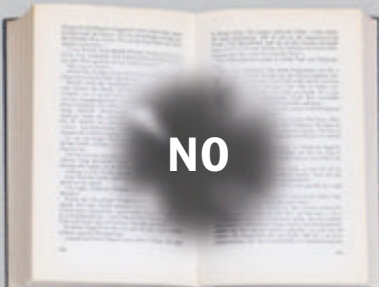
YOU MAY



NOT KNOW



UNTIL THERE'S



NO

ONLY PreserVision AREDS 2 contains the exact levels of clinically proven nutrients now recommended by the National Eye Institute to help reduce the risk of progression for people with moderate to advanced Macular Degeneration.*†

†Age-Related Eye Disease Study 2 Research Group. Lutein + zeaxanthin and omega-3 fatty acids for age-related macular degeneration: the Age-Related Eye Disease Study 2 (AREDS2) randomized clinical trial. JAMA. 2013 May 15;309(19):2005-15. National Eye Institute website: <http://www.nei.nih.gov/areds2/> Accessed October 2013 ©Bausch & Lomb Incorporated ®/TM are trademarks of Bausch & Lomb Incorporated or its affiliates. AREDS2 is a registered trademark of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). US/PV2/14/0030b.

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IS GOING

GOING

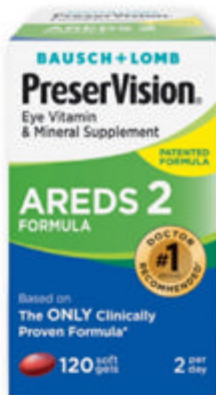
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Natural Ways to Fix Your Knees

Remedies that really work, plus when to turn to drugs or surgery

BY RICHARD LALIBERTE FROM *PREVENTION*

Smart Exercise

Definitely don't stop working out. Staying active builds muscles that support the knee joint. Two things to avoid if you have pain: running and doing full leg extensions with a resistance machine. Better bets: walking, bicycling, and "closed kinetic chain" exercises, in which the foot stays planted (as on an elliptical trainer).

Healing Foods

They go straight to your knees. Drinking 1 percent or fat-free milk helped women put the brakes on knee osteoarthritis in one study. Other research indicates that people who eat fruit containing vitamin C show fewer signs of heading toward osteoarthritis than those who don't. In another study,

a daily 510 mg ginger extract supplement improved the knee pain of arthritis patients.

Ice

Frozen peas pair nicely with swelling and pain. Whether you injure your knee or suffer an arthritis flare-up, ice molded around the joint for 20 minutes every hour helps bring down inflammation.

Weight Loss

Every pound you lose feels like five fewer pounds to the knee. Exercise and a healthy diet can each help you lose, but dropping pounds by combining the two is the gold standard for relieving pain and restoring function, according to one recent study.

Glucosamine/Chondroitin

Some knees respond; some don't. That's why the benefit looks statistically nonexistent, on average, in studies. Try it for two to three months: That's when it will help if it's going to.

NSAIDs

Medication like ibuprofen (Advil) is better than acetaminophen (Tylenol). If your stomach can take it, pop the drug for ten to 14 days. "That's more effective than stopping and starting," says Elizabeth

Matzkin, MD, of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons.

Injections

Corticosteroids can ease knee pain by reducing inflammation when injected directly into the joint. They work well but temporarily. Repeated injections may deteriorate cartilage, so doctors usually limit shots to three or four times a year.

Knee Replacement

If less-invasive options fail, consider surgery. A surgeon resurfaces the ends of the femur and tibia (upper and lower leg bones) where they meet and replaces damaged cartilage with metal and plastic implants. It's the most drastic option, but it could save your stair-climbing career.

Platelet-Rich Plasma

Blood gets removed, treated, and then injected into the joint with concentrated proteins called growth factors. Platelet-rich plasma has been used by athletes for sprains; now there's early evidence that it helps with knee pain. If it holds up in more studies, the method might go mainstream in a few years.



Sources: Michael J. Stuart, MD, professor of orthopedic surgery at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota; Allen D. Sawitzke, MD, associate professor at the University of Utah Hospital & Clinics; Elizabeth Matzkin, MD, of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons.

6,000

The number of steps per day that lowers the risk of mobility issues in people who have or are at risk of knee osteoarthritis.

CocoaVia®

(Made from the good stuff in chocolate.)



Despite the chocolate-y rumors, the real health benefits of chocolate come from cocoa flavanols. *CocoaVia*® daily supplement delivers the highest concentration of cocoa flavanols, which are scientifically proven to promote a healthy heart by supporting healthy blood flow[†]. And that's essential to maintaining who you are for years to come. To learn more visit CocoaVia.com/StayYou



[†]This statement has not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

Breakfast Mistakes Healthy People Make

BY THE PHYSICIANS
OF THE DOCTORS

■ **YOU EAT SOMETHING DIFFERENT EVERY DAY.** According to a recent British study, people with the most day-to-day variation in the calorie count of their morning meal were 90 percent more likely to have a large waist, a heart disease risk factor.

■ **YOUR MEAL IS TOO SKIMPY.** Diabetes patients who ate a large, nutritious breakfast for three months had a reduction in blood sugar and blood pressure three times greater than that of people who ate a smaller meal, according to a 2013 Israeli study. Breakfasts high in protein may lower levels of ghrelin, the “hunger hormone.”

■ **YOU EAT CEREAL WITH SMALL FLAKES.** Pennsylvania State University researchers crushed a wheat flake cereal to 80 percent, 60 percent, and 40 percent of the original size. As flake size decreased (the cereal looked more crushed), participants

poured themselves a lower volume of cereal but still consumed more calories compared with a bowl containing bigger flakes.

■ **YOU OPT FOR BUTTER OVER PEANUT BUTTER.** Overweight women who added peanuts or peanut butter to a breakfast of OJ and Cream of Wheat reported feeling fuller for up to 12 hours afterward, found a study in the *British Journal of Nutrition*. Nuts increased levels of peptide YY, a hormone that helps you feel full after meals. 

Cohost Travis
Stork, MD



Reader's Digest and *The Doctors* bring America the health information that helps you thrive. Watch the show daily (check local listings).

THE DOCTORS



nly

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THINK ALL EGGS ARE THE SAME? Then you haven't experienced Eggland's Best.

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Hungry for better taste? EBs deliver more of the farm-fresh flavor you and your family love. Any way you cook them!

So why settle for ordinary when you can enjoy the best? **Eggland's Best.**

egglandsbest.com



Better taste. Better nutrition.
Better Eggs.™



My Laughter Rx For Your Heart

BY MICHAEL MILLER, MD, WITH CATHERINE KNEPPER

FROM THE BOOK *HEAL YOUR HEART*

☛ ONE OF MY FAVORITE moments as a physician occurs when, with a very somber look, I inform patients that there's one thing they absolutely must do in order to make a successful recovery after a cardiac event: Go home and laugh until they cry.

You see, we now know that there's far more to maintaining heart health and reversing heart disease than diet, exercise, and cholesterol levels. The latest research indicates that stress, and an inability to deal with it, is a direct contributor to heart disease. For example, a study involving nearly 250,000 people found that anxiety was associated with a 26 percent increase in coronary heart disease over an 11-year period.

Anger and hostility rank at the top of the list of heart-harmful emotions. Harvard Medical School researchers recently found that 40 percent of patients who suffered a heart attack reported significant anger within the previous year, and roughly 8 percent of that group reported that they felt

rage within two hours of heart attack symptoms.

But while studies reveal a great deal about the harm that negative emotions deliver to the heart, they also clearly demonstrate the amazing healing power of positive emotions. In my 25 years as a cardiologist performing clinical trials and treating patients, I've seen firsthand how we can harness optimism, confidence, laughter, social connections, and relaxation to help our hearts get and stay healthy. ➡➡





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Laugh Hysterically

Deep belly laughter triggers the release of endorphins, which activate receptors in our blood vessels' linings that signal the production of nitric oxide. This powerful chemical causes blood vessel dilation, increases blood flow, reduces vascular inflammation and buildup of cholesterol plaque, and decreases platelet stickiness, which lowers the risk of blood clots.

In an early study, my team saw that people with heart disease were 40 percent less likely to use humor in an uncomfortable situation, such as having a waiter spill a drink on them, than people with healthy hearts. In another study, when we asked people to watch a clip from *Saving Private Ryan* or *There's Something About Mary*, we found that participants' blood vessels were narrowing by up to 50 percent during the stress-inducing clip, while vessel dilation in people who watched a funny clip increased 22 percent. After just 15 minutes of laughing, volunteers got the same vascular benefit as they would from spending 15 to 30 minutes at the gym or taking a daily statin.

Cue the Music

Medical science is now proving what people have known for hundreds of years: that music is deeply healing. In one study, researchers found that listening to music

25 minutes daily for four weeks resulted in a 12 mm Hg reduction in systolic blood pressure (the top number) and a 5 mm Hg decrease in diastolic blood pressure (the bottom number). Results like these are equivalent to the benefit of taking a strong blood pressure medication.

The calming effect of music is so powerful that listening to relaxing music before cardiac surgery was more effective at reducing stress than a sedative medication. And a group who listened to music after surgery fared better than patients who received the sedative. One theory is that music acts directly on the body's autonomic nervous system, which is responsible for heart rate and blood pressure.

Cuddle Up

During childhood visits to the doctor, I remember feeling that everything would be fine when my pediatrician would place his hand on my upper shoulder as he listened to my lungs. Early in my training, I did the same thing to my patients. Several studies support the idea that interpersonal touch has important heart-health benefits. In one study, women who received frequent hugs from their partner showed reduced heart rates and blood pressure as well as higher levels of the powerful neurotransmitter oxytocin, which leads to blood vessel dilation.



HEAL YOUR HEART BY MICHAEL MILLER, MD, COPYRIGHT © 2014 BY MICHAEL MILLER, MD, IS PUBLISHED BY RODALE BOOKS, RODALEINC.COM.

Sweet raisins and tart cranberries.

Together at last.

I love redheads

Stop, I'm blushing



New Kellogg's Raisin Bran® with Cranberries.

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NEWS FROM THE

World of Medicine

BY KELSEY KLOSS

Kidney Stones Forecast Bone Injuries

People with kidney or urinary tract stones are more likely to fracture a bone. After British researchers studied nearly 52,000 people diagnosed with stones and more than 517,000 who were not, they found that after five years, men with stones had a 10 percent greater risk of bone fractures; women had up to a 52 percent higher risk. People with stones leach calcium into their urine, which may cause skeletal calcium loss as well.

How Stress Breaks Women's Hearts

In a recent Duke University study, men and women with heart disease performed stressful tasks while researchers studied their heart functions. Fifty-seven percent of the women experienced reduced blood flow to their hearts during stressful times compared with 41 percent of the men. Blood platelet clumping, which can lead to a heart attack,

was also more prevalent in stressed women than in stressed men—a finding researchers say could help tailor blood-thinning treatment for more effective use in women.

Why Jet Lag Can Make You Gain Weight

Your gut bacteria are sensitive to time—and this could affect your weight. When Israeli researchers studied the feces of both humans and mice (talk about dirty work!), they found that when people had jet lag, the composition of their gut microbes shifted, favoring bacteria strains linked to obesity. A similar shift was

found in mice exposed to alternating light-dark schedules.

Experts believe this means they may one day be able to use probiotic supplements to prevent weight gain in those with abnormal schedules, like frequent fliers and night workers.



PROP STYLIST: ROBIN FINLAY

The Sodium Bomb in Lunch

You may want to reconsider your daily midday meal selection. Sandwiches contribute about 30 percent of the daily sodium limit of 2,300 milligrams recommended for most Americans, according to a recent study in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*. For those ages 50 and older, they contribute nearly 50 percent. In the study, sandwich eaters also consumed an average of 300 more calories and 600 more milligrams of sodium than those who munched on other fare.

The Hidden Risk of Midlife Migraines

In a study recently published in the journal *Neurology*, researchers analyzed data that originally tracked 5,620 adults for 25 years, beginning in 1967. Participants were interviewed about migraines in middle age, then were asked about Parkinson's disease symptoms later in life. The researchers found that patients who had migraines with aura (seeing zigzags or lights before a migraine) were more than twice as likely to be diagnosed with Parkinson's disease or have Parkinson's-like symptoms as people without migraines.

Surgery "Prehab" More Effective than Rehab

Canadian researchers studied 77 subjects scheduled for colorectal cancer surgery, who were counseled on

exercise, nutrition, and relaxation. Half the patients started the program about a month before surgery and continued for eight weeks after; the other half started right after the procedure. Two months after surgery, the "prehab" group performed significantly better in a mobility test than at the study's start, while the traditional rehab group did worse.

The Mental Secret to Aging Gracefully

In a new Yale School of Public Health study of 100 older adults (average age of 81), researchers showed some participants positive words associated with aging, such as *spry* and *creative*. The words flashed too quickly for participants to be conscious of them, but those who viewed them improved in physical areas, like balance, for three weeks after. Participants who didn't view words didn't experience such improvements.

Ward Off Ovarian Cancer With Tea

Women who drink at least two cups of black tea daily have a 32 percent lower risk of ovarian cancer compared with those who drink one cup or less per day, according to a large study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. This may be due to certain flavonoids (antioxidant compounds synthesized by plants) in black tea. The study did not include other types of teas.



Is your **BLADDER** **CALLING THE** **SHOTS?**



Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) is approved by the FDA to treat overactive bladder (OAB) symptoms of urgency, frequency and leakage:



Urgency



Frequency



Leakage

In clinical trials, those taking Myrbetriq made fewer trips to the bathroom and had fewer leaks than those not taking Myrbetriq. Your results may vary.

Talk to Your Doctor!

Tear out this ad with some discussion topics below and bring it to your doctor.

- “I sometimes have leaks.”
- “I feel like I have to go to the bathroom too often.”
- “What could it mean when I have sudden, uncontrollable urges to urinate?”

Learn about prescription savings at Myrbetriq.com

Subject to eligibility. Restrictions may apply.



Important Safety Information

Myrbetriq may increase your blood pressure, which should be checked by your doctor during treatment.

Use of MYRBETRIQ (meer-BEH-trick)

Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) is a prescription medicine for adults used to treat overactive bladder with symptoms of urgency, frequency, and leakage.

Important Safety Information (continued)

Myrbetriq may increase your chances of not being able to empty your bladder. Tell your doctor right away if you have trouble emptying your bladder or you have a weak urine stream.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take including medications for overactive bladder or other medicines such as thioridazine (Mellaril® and Mellaril S®), flecainide (Tambocor™), propafenone (Rythmol®), digoxin (Lanoxin®).^{*} Myrbetriq may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how Myrbetriq works.

Before taking Myrbetriq, tell your doctor if you have liver or kidney problems. In clinical studies, the most common side effects seen with Myrbetriq included increased blood pressure, common cold symptoms (nasopharyngitis), urinary tract infection and headache.

Please see Brief Summary of Prescribing Information for Myrbetriq (mirabegron) on following page.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.



Myrbetriq is a registered trademark of Astellas Pharma Inc.

^{*}All other trademarks or registered trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

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Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) extended-release tablets 25 mg, 50 mg

Brief Summary based on FDA-approved patient labeling

Read the Patient Information that comes with Myrbetriq® (mirabegron) before you start taking it and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This summary does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your medical condition or treatment.

What is Myrbetriq (meer-BEH-trick)?

Myrbetriq is a prescription medication for **adults** used to treat the following symptoms due to a condition called **overactive bladder**:

- urge urinary incontinence: a strong need to urinate with leaking or wetting accidents
- urgency: a strong need to urinate right away
- frequency: urinating often

It is not known if Myrbetriq is safe and effective in children.

What is overactive bladder?

Overactive bladder occurs when you cannot control your bladder contractions. When these muscle contractions happen too often or cannot be controlled, you can get symptoms of overactive bladder, which are urinary frequency, urinary urgency, and urinary incontinence (leakage).

What should I tell my doctor before taking Myrbetriq?

Before you take Myrbetriq, tell your doctor if you:

- have liver problems or kidney problems
- have very high uncontrolled blood pressure
- have trouble emptying your bladder or you have a weak urine stream
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if Myrbetriq will harm your unborn baby. Talk to your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. It is not known if Myrbetriq passes into your breast milk. You and your doctor should decide if you will take Myrbetriq or breastfeed. You should not do both.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take,

including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Myrbetriq may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how Myrbetriq works.

Tell your doctor if you take:

- thioridazine (Mellaril® or Mellaril-S®)*
- flecainide (Tambocor™)
- propafenone (Rythmol®)
- digoxin (Lanoxin®)

How should I take Myrbetriq?

- Take Myrbetriq exactly as your doctor tells you to take it.
- You should take 1 Myrbetriq tablet 1 time a day.
- You should take Myrbetriq with water and swallow the tablet whole.
- Do not crush or chew the tablet.
- You can take Myrbetriq with or without food.
- If you miss a dose of Myrbetriq, begin taking Myrbetriq again the next day. Do not take 2 doses of Myrbetriq the same day.
- If you take too much Myrbetriq, call your doctor or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.

What are the possible side effects of Myrbetriq?

Myrbetriq may cause serious side effects including:

- **increased blood pressure.** Myrbetriq may cause your blood pressure to increase or make your blood pressure worse if you have a history of high blood pressure. It is recommended that your doctor check your blood pressure while you are taking Myrbetriq.
- **inability to empty your bladder (urinary retention).** Myrbetriq may increase your chances of

not being able to empty your bladder if you have bladder outlet obstruction or if you are taking other medicines to treat overactive bladder. Tell your doctor right away if you are unable to empty your bladder.

The **most common side effects** of Myrbetriq include:

- increased blood pressure
- common cold symptoms (nasopharyngitis)
- urinary tract infection
- headache

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away or if you have hives, skin rash or itching while taking Myrbetriq.

These are not all the possible side effects of Myrbetriq.

For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

How should I store Myrbetriq?

- Store Myrbetriq between 59°F to 86°F (15°C to 30°C). Keep the bottle closed.
- Safely throw away medicine that is out of date or no longer needed.

Keep Myrbetriq and all medicines out of the reach of children.

General information about the safe and effective use of Myrbetriq

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in the Patient Information leaflet. Do not use Myrbetriq for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give Myrbetriq to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them.

Where can I go for more information?

This is a summary of the most important information about Myrbetriq. If you would like more information, talk with your doctor. You can ask your doctor or pharmacist for information about Myrbetriq that is written for health professionals.

For more information, visit **www.Myrbetriq.com** or call (800) 727-7003.

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*Nine photographers offer their
version of awe and surprise*

WHAT DOES WONDER LOOK LIKE?



DAN WINTERS, 2008

"I was in Marathon, Florida, on the Gulf of Mexico, and I was working with people at a dolphin research center. They knew a friendly dolphin who liked to swim right up to their boat. To get this shot, I leaned over the edge and held my camera six inches above the water. When I heard the word wonder, the first thing that came to my mind was the incredible beauty that is under the surface of the ocean."



RALPH GIBSON, 1975

"I was walking in Little Italy in New York City after 12 o'clock Mass on a summer Sunday. I saw a priest, and I wanted to take a recognizable image of him yet make it as abstract as possible. For me, wonder is when I see something that transcends its original intention, purpose, or appearance. That's what happened here."



ALON GOLDSMITH, 2012

"In fall 2012, the space shuttle Endeavour was transported from the Los Angeles airport and through the streets to the science museum. Even though I was sick with the flu, I made myself ride my bike to go see it pass by. I parked but couldn't get through the crowds, so I ducked into an alley. As I was running down it, I looked behind me and saw this. I used my iPhone to take the photo."

Knowing this shuttle had been in space and was now in the L.A. streets made it crazy and wonderful to witness."





A full-page background image featuring a diver in silhouette, upside down, against a deep blue background. The diver is positioned in the lower center of the frame. The background is filled with numerous out-of-focus light spots in shades of blue and white, creating a bokeh effect. The diver's arms are spread wide, and their legs are also spread, forming a V-shape. The overall mood is serene and focused.

LOGAN MOCK-BUNTING,
2012

"This was off Grand Cayman Island at a free-diving contest, in which divers see how deep they can go using their breath. This safety diver tries to ensure that competitors surface safely. He can dive 160 feet on one breath—what the human body can do is absolutely amazing."



MEREDITH HEUER, 2013

"My son was so thrilled by this drugstore bow. It broke after two photos, yet he still plays with the pieces. Kids have the ability to take a trifle and create this incredible other world."



ED KASHI, 2002

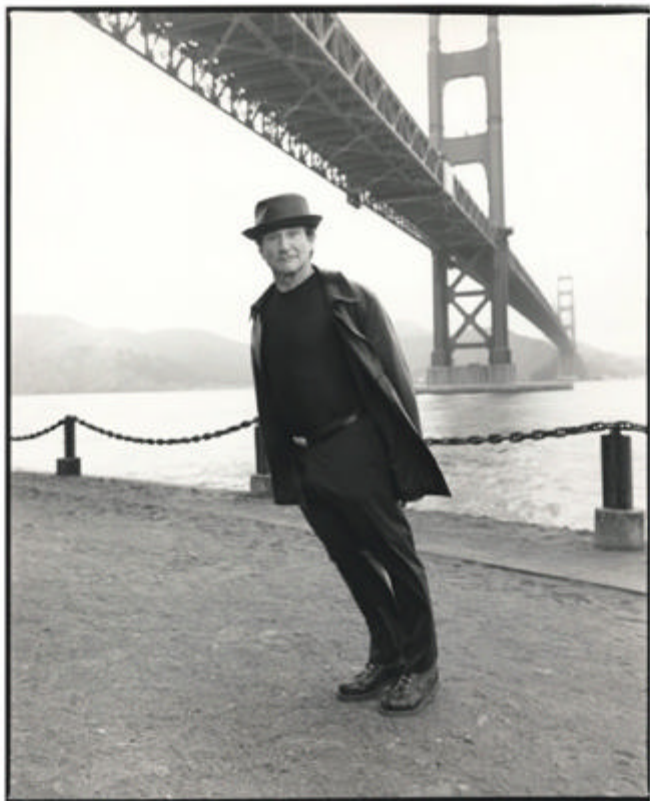
"The late Jose Martins Ribeiro Nunes was a boat pilot in Aracaju, Brazil. After he guided a ship through the harbor, he'd dive off and swim six to nine miles back to shore. He was 74 when I met him; he did this job for 40 years. He walked around town barefoot, and he drank water from only the river or the sea. He was a character from a different time."



A photograph of the interior of Antelope Canyon, showing smooth, undulating sandstone walls with horizontal light and dark bands. The lighting is warm and directional, creating deep shadows and bright highlights that emphasize the curves and textures of the rock.

WESLEY JOHNSON, 2008

"I took my wife to Arizona's Antelope Canyon for our fifth anniversary. It's like nature's washing machine—water has carved stone into these beautiful shapes. There's nothing predictable. Wonderment is not knowing what's around the next bend."



MARY ELLEN MARK, 1998

"Robin Williams was a magical wonder: a mix of brilliant talent and incredible energy. It was hard to keep up with him—ideas kept popping into his head. We worked for two hours, and he never stopped moving. I was exhausted, but I'm sure he could have done at least two more."



GLENN GLASSER, 2012

"In Delaware, Emma Lavelle showed off her 'magic arms': 3-D-printed braces that supported her muscles, which were weakened by a rare disorder. She was an extraordinary kid who exuded a wonderful sense of life." 



Laughter

THE BEST MEDICINE

GOOFUS AND GALLANT OF THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

Remember Goofus and Gallant from *Highlights* magazine? Gallant always did things correctly, while Goofus was like us—messing up right and left. Turns out, they can be found in the animal world too.



Gallant waits patiently to be fed.



Gallant likes to exercise daily.



Gallant politely poses for photographs.



Goofus camps out in his bowl.



Goofus hides when it's time for gym class.



Goofus has to ruin every picture.

I GOT MY HAIR HIGHLIGHTED

because I thought some strands were more important than others.

Comedian **MITCH HEDBERG**

A COUPLE ARE SITTING in their living room, sipping wine. Out of

the blue, the wife says, "I love you." "Is that you or the wine talking?" asks the husband.

"It's me," says the wife. "Talking to the wine."

Submitted by **MARVIN KEELER,**
Salina, Kansas

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK (CATS AND GOATS). AP PHOTO/KERSTIN JOENSSON. COURTESY LINCOLNSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE

THE COOL PART about naming your kid is you don't have to add six numbers to make sure the name is available.  @BILLMURRAY

THE LATEST PARENTING fads, according to the *Onion*:

- Couples are waiting to announce their pregnancy until after their child has graduated college and become a partner in a successful law firm.
- Parents are choosing not to learn the gender of their obstetrician.
- As part of the new Infinity Womb trend, women are using a wide range of Lamaze, strength-training, and yoga techniques to forcefully prevent their children from ever leaving their wombs, forever protecting them from the harsh realities of the world.

I CAN STILL REMEMBER a time when I knew more than my phone.

 @CLARKEKANT

TWO MEN HAVE BEEN ice fishing all day. One has had no luck, while the other has pulled out a ton of fish.

"What's your secret?" asks the unlucky fisherman.

"Mmmmm mmm mm mmm mmmmm mmm mmm," is the reply.

"I'm sorry; what did you say?"

"Mmmmm mmm mm mmm."

"I still didn't understand you."

The lucky fisherman spits something into his hand and says slowly and clearly, "You've got to keep your worms warm."

THE STAR OF *Cake Boss* was arrested for DWI. Police interrogated him for 30 minutes at 350 degrees.

Comedian **JOE TOPLYN**

EVERY NOVEL is a mystery novel if you never finish it.  @MEGANAMRAM



EDIBLE COMPLEX

Food blogs are rife with pressing questions, helpful hints, and caustic comments from readers. One site took a jaundiced look at what one might expect to find on such boards.

■ "I don't eat white flour, so I tried making it with raw almonds that I'd activated by chewing with my mouth open to receive direct sunlight, and it turned out terrible. This recipe is terrible."

■ "I don't have an oven; can I still make this? Please reply immediately."

■ "A warning that if you cook this at 275°F for three hours instead of at 400°F for 25 minutes, it's completely ruined. Do you have any suggestions?"

MALLORY ORTBERG, on the-toast.net

Cook up a batch of jokes and lists, and it might be worth \$\$\$. See page 7 for details, or go to rd.com/submit.



The Hearts of Soldiers

Stories behind lost
Purple Hearts, and the man
who finds their owners

BY ROBERT KIENER





Twenty-seven Purple Hearts that Zach Fike intends to return

On a chilly January afternoon in 2013, hundreds of people crowded a community center in Rutherfordton, North Carolina, to see a Purple Heart pinned to the lapel of World War II veteran George Hemphill. Trim and red-haired at 90, George stood proudly in his good blue suit to receive his medal almost 70 years after it had gone missing. The morning of the ceremony, George told his daughter Donna, "I'm going to do my best not to cry." But he found it hard to keep his composure when the audience jumped to their feet and applauded. "I'm not the hero," he told them. "The heroes are still over there, the ones who didn't come back."

In 1944, George was a 21-year-old Army corporal stationed in France when he was temporarily blinded by shrapnel and awarded a Purple Heart. From his hospital bed, he put the medal in the mail to his family. But the Purple Heart, engraved with George's name, never arrived in North Carolina. Like many other World War II vets, George did not detail his war experiences when he returned home, so no one was aware of the award. As far as he knew, the medal was lost to history.

Then, in 2000, in a little antiques shop in South Carolina, Robert Blum spied George's Purple Heart in a pile of other things and purchased it for \$70. "I bought it to return it," says Robert, a Vietnam-era vet, now 70. He couldn't get through to George, however. Years passed before Robert heard about an organization, Purple Hearts Reunited, that brought military veterans together with their missing medals. Robert called the organization, and founder and director Zachariah Fike picked up the phone. Through networking and

online searching, Zach was quickly able to find the medal's rightful owner. And a year later, on that January day, Robert presented it to George, with Zach, a full-time Vermont National Guard captain, standing nearby in full dress uniform.

Zach comes from a long line of soldiers. His mother was an Army drill sergeant, his father was an Army command sergeant major, and his relatives served in six U.S. wars—the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Civil War, both world wars, and the Vietnam War. A veteran of nearly 17 years, he served in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. For a decade, he has collected military memorabilia. When his mother gave him a Purple Heart as a Christmas gift in 2009, though, he knew he would give it up. "I had to return the medal [to its owner]," says Zach, 33. "It needed to go home." The engraving on the medal said Corrado A. G. Piccoli, but Zach's Internet search came up empty. Then,

just days later, Zach was deployed to Afghanistan as an infantryman.

After a year at war, Zach returned home and continued his search for Piccoli. On a genealogy website, he found a reference: Corrado A. G. Piccoli, who had six brothers and sisters, was born in Italy in 1932, immigrated with his parents to Watertown, New York, and enlisted in the Army in 1943. The private had been killed in action in France on October 7, 1944. But Zach couldn't find the man's siblings to inform them about the medal.

As part of his quest, Zach drove four

hours from his home in Georgia, Vermont, to Watertown one snowy, windy winter afternoon and pored through the burial registry of a local cemetery. The caretaker told Zach that Private Piccoli's remains had been transported back to Watertown from France in 1948.

"You mean he is buried right here?" Zach was astonished. Many American WWII vets were buried abroad. The caretaker offered to take Zach to the grave site.

Shortly, they came to a marble slab engraved with *Piccoli*—the final resting

place of the soldier Zach had been seeking for more than a year. He choked up and silently spoke to the spirit of Corrado. "Thank you. It's as if you've been guiding me."

Local residents helped Zach track down Corrado's sister Adeline Rockko, 87, who had assumed that her brother's Purple Heart was with another of their siblings all along.

"The Purple Heart was all my parents had of my brother," Adeline told Zach. "They hung on to it for dear life. On special occasions, they'd take it out of the trunk in their bedroom

"The medals don't belong in a basement or a box," says Fike, who received a Purple Heart in 2010 after being wounded in Afghanistan. "We should put these people on a pedestal."



GROOMING: ALLISON BROOKE



The Military's Oldest Medal

The Purple Heart was originally called the Badge of Military Merit when George Washington created it in 1782. Only three documented awards were given before it fell into disuse. In 1932, Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur revived it. The medal was redesigned as a purple heart with a bronze border encircling a portrait of George Washington. MacArthur awarded it to soldiers who were wounded in action and to the families of those who died in combat. To date, nearly two million members of the U.S. armed forces have received medals.

Inspired by the return of this Purple Heart, Zach poured time and money into his project, determined to replicate his success for other military families. He has spent the better part of four years purchasing Purple Hearts from antiques stores and pawnshops and via the Internet—one found in a landfill, another at a yard sale, still more in an abandoned storage locker and the trash. He has gone back in time to track down their owners and returned more than 100 medals. Another 200 of them are ready for return.

He remembers the stories behind each one. "It's as if they're always with me."

Once Zach locates the owner of a Purple Heart, he mails it to the person or presents it at a "return ceremony," during which he recounts the soldier's service and the history of the Purple Heart. Each return costs about \$1,200, which includes purchasing, refurbishing, and framing the medals, plus the

and let us hold it." Zach arranged a ceremony in which three generations of Corrado's family came together to honor Private Piccoli. "Lots of tears, lots of laughter," Zach recalls. By chance, the event was held on August 7, which the family later discovered is National Purple Heart Day.

ceremony itself. He has spent more than \$50,000 of his own money—Purple Hearts Reunited receives some small donations—so now when his searches take him far and wide, he often sleeps in his rental car. It's wearing on him a little: "Now that I'm married and have a young child, it's

getting harder to afford the cost and put in the time," he admits. Still, he shows no signs of slowing down.

With each Purple Heart that lands in Zach's hands, there's a new story to uncover. In one particularly poignant one, a medal was discovered in a dryer's lint trap in the laundry room of the Robertsedale Healthcare Center in Robertsedale, Alabama. The name engraved on the back was Toulman Freeman. Nursing home administrators checked their records and came up with no one by that name, so they placed the medal in a box and put it on a shelf. In 2012, the nursing home's manager came across it. She reached out to Zach, who researched Toulman Freeman and found a WWII soldier of the 7th Armored Division by that name who was killed in Holland at the age of 22. Dated 1944, the soldier's obituary mentioned his eight brothers and sisters. Through ingenious searching, Zach found Toulman's last surviving sibling, 91-year-old Willie Elizabeth Freeman. At a return ceremony attended by Willie and other relatives, Zach finally learned the story behind the medal.

Shortly after Toulman's death, the medal was presented to his young widow, Estelle Freeman. Relatives told Zach that Estelle had been so devastated by her husband's death that she

vowed to carry his Purple Heart with her wherever she went. Throughout the years, even after she remarried, she carried the medal with her.

After losing her second husband, Estelle entered a nursing home and brought the medal with her. She took it out to hold almost every day. When she discovered it was missing, she broke down. "It was as if she had lost



With each Purple Heart that lands in Zach's hands, there's a new story to uncover.

Toulman all over again," Zach says. The nursing home's employees looked everywhere, but no one thought to check the dryer. Sadly, Estelle died soon after the medal went missing.

On September 11, 2010, Zach was wounded by an insurgent rocket attack at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan and received a Purple Heart of his own. He doesn't like to talk about the award and insists the honor is not the reason for his ongoing passion for his work.

"These Purple Hearts were awarded to people who fought, bled, and died for this country," he says. "That's why we should do everything we can to see that they are returned."



To support Purple Hearts Reunited, go to purpleheartsreunited.org.

The wait is over. Here are your favorite ...

Funny Teacher Stories



“True terror is to wake up one morning and discover that your high school class is running the country.”

A lot of teachers can relate to Kurt Vonnegut's quote. From kindergarten to senior year, they've seen it all. So we recently asked members of this heroic profession to share their stories about the hilarious, sweet, droll, and occasionally clueless things their students do or say. Thousands wrote in, positive that their tale was worthy of the **\$1,000 GRAND PRIZE**. Here are the finalists, with the A+ winning anecdote at the end.

Rock Me, Amadeus

Performing Mozart should have been the highlight of my middle school chorus class. But after a few uninspired attempts, an exasperated student raised her hand and said, “Mrs. Willis, we want to sing music from our generation, not yours.”

WENDY WILLIS, *Naples, Florida*

Lost in Translation

To my German-language students, I'm “Frau Draper.” One girl gave me a pin she'd made with my name on it. Unfortunately, it wasn't big enough to include my entire name, which meant that she presented me with a badge that read FRAUD.

CATHLEEN DRAPER, *Edmonds, Washington*



Why Waste Paper?

I recently asked a student where his homework was. He replied, "It's still in my pencil."

LARRY TIMMONS, *Surprise, Arizona*

Money Laundering

"Don't do that," I said when one of my first graders playfully draped a dollar bill over his eyes. "Money is full of germs."

"It is?" he asked.

"Yes, it's very dirty."

He thought about it a moment.

"Is that why they call people who have a lot of it 'filthy rich'?"

ELIZABETH WEBBER,
Prospect Park, Pennsylvania

Me, Myself, and Him

Jimmy had trouble figuring out when to use *I* instead of *me*. Then one day, while creating a sentence in front of the first-grade class, Jimmy haltingly said, "I ... I ... I shut the door."

Realizing that he was right, he jumped up and down and shouted, "Me did it!"

SUSAN WILLIAMS,
Portland, Indiana

Hey, You!

My sixth-grade class would not leave me alone for a second. It was a constant stream of "Ms. Osborn?"

"Ms. Osborn?" "Ms. Osborn?" Fed up, I said firmly, "Do you think we could go for just five minutes without anyone saying 'Ms. Osborn?!'"

The classroom got quiet. Then, from the back, a soft voice said, "Um ... Cyndi?"

CYNDI OSBORN, *New York, New York*

Driven Crazy

During the driver's-ed class that my friend taught, a student approached a right turn.

"Use your turn signal," my friend reminded her.

"No one's coming," said the student.

"It doesn't matter. It might help those behind you."

Chastened, the student turned around to the students in the backseat and said, "I'm turning right up ahead."

JOSEPH WAGNER, *Prineville, Oregon*

That Aha! Moment

"Who discovered Pikes Peak?"

I asked an eighth grader. He shrugged. "All right, here's a hint," I continued. "Who's buried in Grant's Tomb?"

"Grant?" he asked tentatively.

"Good. Now, who discovered Pikes Peak?"

"Grant!"

MAX CAMPBELL,
Dowagiac, Michigan



Thanks for the Help

On the last day of the year, my first graders gave me beautiful hand-written letters. As I read them aloud, my emotions got the better of me, and I started to choke up.

"I'm sorry," I said. "I'm having a hard time reading."

One of my students said, "Just sound it out." **CINDY BUGG**, *Clive, Iowa*

Problem Solvers

The kids were painting a project for social studies and got some paint on the floor. Fearing someone might slip, I asked a student to take care of it.

A few minutes later, a piece of paper appeared on the floor with the words *Caution—Wet Paint*.

CHRISTY KNOPP, *Fairfield, Ohio*

Let's Ask the Professor

During snack time, a kindergartner asked why some raisins were yellow while others were black. I didn't know the answer, so I asked my friend, a first-grade teacher, if she knew. "Yellow raisins are made from green grapes, and black raisins are made from red grapes," she explained.

One little boy suggested, "Maybe that's why she teaches first grade, because she's just a little bit smarter than you."

ERICA COLES, *Watertown, Tennessee*

HERE'S TO THE PARENTS

The fish tank in my classroom was brimming with guppies. So I told the kids they could have some as long as they brought in a note from home. That's how I received the following: "Dear Mrs. Swanson, Would you please give Johnny as many guppies as you can spear, as we are going to bread them."

SHERYL SWANSON, *Billings, Montana*

During a parent-teacher conference, a mother insisted I shouldn't have taken points off her daughter's English paper for calling her subject Henry 8 instead of Henry VIII.

"We have only regular numbers on our keyboard," she explained. "No Roman numerals."

LISA RICH, *Milledgeville, Georgia*

A note from a student's mother: "Please excuse Chris from reading, because he doesn't like it."

ROY HARTLEY, *Elberton, Georgia*

When her child's towel was stolen during a school swimming trip, an irate parent demanded of my mother, "What kind of juvenile delinquents are in class with my child?!"

"I'm sure it was taken accidentally," said Mom. "What does it look like?"

"It's white," said the parent. "And it says *Holiday Inn* on it."

HEATHER LAUBY, *St. Louis, Missouri*





THESE STUDENTS HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS

Scene: History class.

Question: Name a famous explorer.

Answer: Dora. **JAMES PARKS,**
Red Lion, Pennsylvania

Scene: Science class.

Question: Why would we not see meteors if Earth had no atmosphere?

Answer: Because we'd all be dead. **HUBERT SNYDER,**
Grand Junction, Colorado

Scene: Second-grade class.

Question: How can we show respect to others?

Answer: If you have a piece of meat, you shouldn't give it to anyone else if you've already licked it.

JANAYE JONES, Mesa, Arizona

Scene: Social studies class.

Question: What does *right to privacy* mean?

Answer: It's the right to be alone in the bathroom. **DEBORAH BERG,**
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Buggin' Out

"In Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*," I said to my sophomore English class, "a man, discontented with his life, wakes up to find he has been transformed into a large, disgusting insect."

A student thrust her hand into the air and asked, "So is this fiction or nonfiction?"

DIANE STURGEON,
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Artist's Rendition

For Columbus Day, I assigned my third-grade class the task of drawing one of Columbus's three ships. I had no sooner sat down when a boy came up with his paper, which had a lone dot in the middle.

"What's that?" I asked.

He replied, "That's Columbus, way out to sea."

DALE BARRETT, Concord, New Hampshire

Why, Thank You

As I welcomed my first-grade students into the classroom, one little girl noticed my polka-dot blouse and paid me the ultimate first-grade compliment: "Oh, you look so beautiful—just like a clown."

PRISCILLA SAWICKI,
Charlotte, North Carolina

Senior Moment

Halfway through the semester, I discovered that a student was retaking my course, even though he'd gotten an A- the first time through. When I

asked him why, he had no recollection of having taken the class before. "But you know," he said, after mulling it over, "I thought some of this seemed familiar. I just couldn't remember where I'd heard it before."

LAWANNA LANCASTER, *Nampa, Idaho*

Everybody's a Critic

A junior in my English class gave a big thumbs-down to the autobiography he'd read. His reason: "The author talks about only himself."

RUTH HUNTER, *Shawnee, Oklahoma*

Sticks and Stones

"I got called the g word," sobbed a third-grade girl.

"OK. Let's calm down," I said, kneeling beside her. "Now, exactly what were you called?"

Between sobs she blurted, "G ... g ... jerk!"

STEVE WRIGHT, *Orangevale, California*



It Doesn't Add Up

When one girl had finished the English portion of the state exam, she removed her glasses and started the math questions.

"Why aren't you wearing your glasses?" she was asked.

She responded, "My glasses are for reading, not math."

KATHY OLSON, *Roselle, Illinois*

Fluent in English

Our assistant principal called in one of my underperforming Intro to Spanish pupils to ask why he was having trouble with the subject.

"I don't know. I just don't understand Ms. Behr," the boy said. "It's like she's speaking another language."

MARCIA BEHR, *Indiana, Pennsylvania*



GRAND-PRIZE WINNER

After a coworker had finished his English lecture and his class had filed out, a tenth grader stayed behind to confront him.

"I don't appreciate being singled out," he told his teacher.

The teacher was confused. "What do you mean?"

"I don't know what the 'oxy' part means, but I know what a 'moron' is, and you looked straight at me when you said it."

JANNIE SMITH, *Ashville, Alabama*



The Book I Will Never Forget



Reader's Digest supports the National Education Association's Read Across America campaign, a daylong reading celebration observed annually on March 2, Dr. Seuss's birthday. This year's selection is *Oh, the Places You'll Go!*, the Seuss classic that celebrates the limitless potential within everyone. In its honor, we asked you to share on our Facebook page the books that made you think, feel, question, and grow.

Beat the Turtle Drum

BY CONSTANCE C. GREENE

I read this during a very difficult time in my childhood. It was the first book I intended to get lost in and did, the first book I walked into with no expectations but ended feeling so many emotions. Most people find it depressing, but I loved it—especially the beginning poem: "Dance along the silver sands and beat the turtle drum, that youth may last forever, and sorrow never come."

RHONDA DAVIS

Jane Eyre

BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË

It was the first novel I ever read. I was nine, and it was summer in the Philippines. I was rummaging through boxes I was not supposed to rummage through, when I found it: pale blue with tea-colored stains on its cover, pages with yellow-orange edges that made each page look gilded in gold. I grew up to be my own version of Jane, living life on my terms and loving just the same way.

LISA TRIPOLI

Watership Down

BY RICHARD ADAMS

This was the first of a few books that my father passed on to me—a story about loners, those on the outside, friendships that tested the boundaries of belief and death, fear and overcoming fear. I identified with the odd little bunny named Fiver and all that he feared, marveling at his determination to save his fellow rabbits from extinction. The book has traveled with me through my father's death, college years, marriage, children, mother's death, divorce, remarriage, grandchildren, and finally to a cherished spot in my guest room.

SHELBY OPPERMANN

A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier

BY ISHMAEL BEAH

I worked at a juvenile institution and had a somewhat narrow view of the kids' situations. Reading this book opened my eyes to the fact that sometimes we don't have a choice in life and must do what is necessary to survive. It made me a better, more patient person.

CHRISTY SMITH

The Harry Potter series

BY J. K. ROWLING

These books gave me comfort, therapy, happiness, and a sense of togetherness with millions of other fans across boundaries of nations and languages. I found my greatest friends in the characters and made friends in real life from connecting

over the series. How can I possibly forget something so important?

RHEA KHURANA

The Kite Runner

BY KHALED HOSSEINI

This is one of the most haunting books I have ever read. The pain of displaced Afghans, the horror stories of those who stayed behind, and the new lease of a fresh start are all relatable. I learned a very important lesson from it: Let go of a traumatic past and embrace a second chance. Not everyone is lucky enough to get one.

YAMINI PUSTAKE BHALERAO

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn

BY BETTY SMITH

I first read this book when I was 13 and have reread it almost every year. Each time, I've seen a line or an incident that spoke to me when I was a child, a teenager, a newlywed, and then a mother. It is ageless and speaks to everyday struggles.

MARIANNE ADAMES TENNANT

Letter from Peking

BY PEARL S. BUCK

I read this book the summer I was 17 and then devoured every other book Buck had written. The stories allowed me to travel to a foreign land—to step into people's homes and observe their lives. These books opened my eyes to differences in culture and reinforced my love for all nationalities.

R

RAMONA SCARBOROUGH

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93 DAYS

American
aid worker
Jessica
Buchanan's
terrifying
ordeal as a
prisoner of
Somali
terrorists



BY JESSICA BUCHANAN FROM THE BOOK *IMPOSSIBLE ODDS*

“I just don’t like it,” my husband, Erik Landemalm, says. “I don’t either,” I respond. “But I don’t have a choice.” Erik and I both know it’s not the best time for me to go to Galkayo, Somalia, a town just across the dangerous Green Line, which separates government-controlled territory from an area terrorized by violent Islamist groups. But the nongovernmental organization (NGO) I work for as an aid worker keeps an office near there, and they’re expecting me.

I started my life in Africa in 2006 as a teacher in Kenya. That’s where I met Erik, who’d ventured to Africa from Sweden. We got married in 2009 and moved to Hargeisa, Somalia. I work for a Danish NGO teaching people how to avoid the land mines that have created a generation of amputees.

But doing charitable work is no protection from violence. Clan warfare plagues southern Somalia, and recently, a bus was bombed on the

same road we’ll be using. We also worry about being robbed. Westerners represent a chance at fast money. But we never wander the region without good cause—and security.

“Go get it done, and get back here safely, OK?” Erik says. He opens his arms for a hug, and I throw my arms around him. I travel to dangerous areas often, but this time, he has special reason for concern: We’re hoping that I’m pregnant.

On October 24, 2011, I take a UN flight to Galkayo, where I meet up with my Danish NGO colleague Poul Thisted and our security officers. We spend the night at the NGO guest-house north of the Green Line. I get a text message from Erik: “Love you. Make sure you are safe.”

The next morning, Poul and I participate in a training session at the office; then I send Erik a text. A sad one: I’m cramping, and it looks like I was wrong about the pregnancy. We’ll keep trying.



Before Erik responds, our car arrives to take us back to the guesthouse. Abdirizak, our local security manager, and I get into the backseat of the Land Cruiser, while Poul climbs into the front seat. I've noticed that the driver is new, and ordinarily I'd ask for an explanation. But Poul doesn't show any concern, so I remain quiet.

Ten minutes later, as if a referee has blown a starting whistle, the attack begins. A large car roars up beside us and careens to a stop, splashing mud all over our windows. Somali men with AK-47 rifles circle our car, pounding on the doors and shouting.

Two men yank open our doors and leap in. One, who later tells me his name is Ali, grabs Abdirizak. Ali's face is a tarmac of acne scars, punctuated by the crazed eyes of someone who has chewed plenty of khat, a plant that at high doses can cause euphoria and hyper-alertness.

Ali points his gun at my head. Our driver—it's now clear he works for the Somali men—speeds away, slamming us around in the passenger compartment. Ali and his cohort wave their guns in our faces, and Ali screams in English, "Mobile!"

After he takes our phones, Ali climbs into the front seat and tells Poul to sit in the back. I lock eyes with Poul and mouth, "What's happening?"

"We're being kidnapped," he says.

The men scream at Poul to shut up, and the car plunges into the dark wilderness, slamming over rough roads.

"Money!" Ali bellows. Poul tells them we don't have any, and fortunately they don't search us. I try to recall our brief hostage training session. The instructors impressed on us the importance of hiding our anger and avoiding conflict. The attackers are in an excitable state and may be provoked into killing us even if they didn't plan to. The instructors urged us to memorize the phone number of someone who would receive our "proof of life" phone call. The only way to aid your own survival in a kidnapping is to have the number to a potential ransom source. There's no chance I could forget Erik's number.

So far, there has been no indication of our attackers' intentions. We don't know who these people are or where they're taking us. All Poul and I can do is exchange troubled glances.

Armed enforcers carrying huge chains of ammunition around their shoulders jump in when we change cars and drivers. We continue driving late into the night, and I'm filled with a sleepy boredom. Suddenly, the car stops, and Ali demands that we get out.

"Walk!" Ali shouts, pointing into open scrubland. "Walk!"

With that, he stomps off. He is not coming with us. More men with guns shout Ali's orders. I can't keep quiet anymore. "Why?" I cry out, trying to look each man in the eyes.

My stomach is a ball of ice. I refuse to move while the men scream orders.

Every one of them appears loaded on khat, their eyes bloodshot.

Poul gently takes my arm. "It's all right, Jessica," he quietly lies. "We have to do what they tell us."

"No!" I whisper. "They'll kill us."

"Jessica, unless we cooperate, we'll have a fatal confrontation right here."

I look around at the men with their rifles trained on us, then one last time at the useless "safety" of the vehicle. Then we turn and begin to walk off into the wilderness. "I'm too young to die," I blurt out to Poul. He gives me a blank look and keeps on walking.

The men escort us farther into the scrub. The night air cools, and I start to shiver. Poul is close by, but we are forbidden to talk. My heavy sandals stand up to the terrain, but I keep scraping the tops of my feet on the low thornbushes.

I can't stop crying, but I do my best to keep it quiet. Finally, we reach our destination. This is it, I think.

Our attackers order us to get down on our knees and turn our backs.

I pray for help. I plead for strength. Then one of the men yells, "Sleep!" They push us to the ground. "Sleep!"

Sleep? Just like that? I hate the gratitude that washes over me, but the word *sleep* is wonderful. It's a reprieve, something close to mercy.

When daylight comes and I am still alive, I cheer up in spite of the hangover left by lack of rest. Our kidnappers march us to a scruffy

stand of acacia trees surrounded by giant termite mounds. Poul motions that he is trying to memorize everything around us. We ask, using pidgin and pantomime, if we can call our NGO. Our suggestion is rejected, but the men bark something about waiting for permission from the "Chairman." Whoever he is, the leader goes by a businesslike title instead of a clerical one. A secular title is good news.

I ask permission to use the toilet and receive a grunt of affirmation. I select a bush for its remote location, watching for anyone who might follow. I look out and see a road. It occurs to me to run. But where? I'm in the middle of nowhere with no identification or money. Any attempt to escape would likely fail.

Back at camp, a man named Abdi introduces himself. He speaks some English and assures me they are not going to kill us. They want money, big money. Once several catnaps and numerous trips to my makeshift toilet pass without my being attacked, I relax a bit. Abdi's assertion appears to be true, at least for now.

Our next few days are spent under the acacia trees. At night, we're forced to sleep on mats in open fields.

Soon, we're on the move again. We remain at one stopover for several days. There is a large thatched roof mounted on tall poles. Abdi is like the camp sergeant. He acts as point man when something needs to get done. He loves to talk, especially



"Poul and I are alive and safe," said Jessica in a video made three weeks after her capture.

when he's had plenty to chew, but he has vicious mood swings. One moment he's discussing philosophy, and the next he's on the phone screaming orders and demanding khat leaves and cigarettes.

I get so thirsty, I may as well have a mouthful of dirt. The small bottle of water given to us each day is far too little. Poul demands more water, persisting even when the guard yells to silence him. A moment later, the guard leaps toward Poul, cocks his rifle, and pulls the trigger. The firing mechanism clicks on the empty chamber.

A few days later, an older man named Jabreel arrives. In English, he identifies himself as a "neutral translator" from Mogadishu, and he tells us, "These men are crazy. They want \$45 million for you."

"Nobody will pay that for two aid workers," I respond.

"I only want to help," he continues. "I tell them the most they'll get is \$900,000."

After darkness falls that day, the Chairman arrives. He looks about 40, with thin facial hair. He mutters

something to Jabreel, who says to us, "Phone call."

At last, it's time for our "proof of life" call. I watch Jabreel dial and see the country code for Kenya. I hear a man answer and identify himself as Mohammed. Jabreel gives me the phone, and the man says he is an assistant to our security adviser. He asks me a few security questions, like the name of my first dog. That's all I get. Then Jabreel snatches the phone away and talks with Mohammed, making sure he works for the NGO.

I'm glad to send the "proof of life" message, but I'm crushed I can't contact Erik. After the quick call, we are herded back to camp, then out to an open field, ending the day with the wave of a gun barrel and a command to sleep.

The next day, Jabreel tells us of the men's concern about surveillance satellites and high-flying planes.

"We're just aid workers," I say. "Nobody would use such things to look for us."

Each day begins to dissolve into the next, daylight hours dragging by under trees, followed by nights of fitful sleep in the open desert. I get a urinary tract infection, and with everyone eating out of the same bowl with their bare hands, I also develop stomach troubles. I have to keep running to a bush while diarrhea twists through me, alternating with bouts of vomiting. I ask the men to get me a doctor. I'm sobbing. They hate it when I cry and angrily order me to shut up. Finally a doctor arrives and gives me a cursory exam, tosses some pills at me, and goes off to chew khat with Jabreel.

One morning, Abdi walks in from the outskirts of the camp, where he's been screaming into his phone. He picks up a large stick and attacks Poul, beating him to the ground.

"Where is big money?" Abdi shouts, swinging the stick.

"It's not our fault," Poul yells.

He swings the stick against Poul's outstretched arms. Poul cries out for him to stop, and I sob in frustration. Abdi notices my distress, but as usual, my tears generate no sympathy. Instead he stomps over, waving the stick. "You, up! Walk!"

I start walking. Abdi screams into

my face like a drill sergeant. "Where is big money?"

I force my voice into a dead calm. "I don't know. Poul doesn't know. You hit us, we still don't know."

He stops and forces me to the ground, then squats in front of me. He glares into my eyes and writes the number 18 in the sand with his finger.

"I get 18 million in seven days, or I cut off your head!"

One day, they bring us out to the desert, and we make a video, two guards standing behind us with assault rifles. They make Poul tell the camera that we're both OK, stressing that there must be no attack by military forces. Then

Poul implores our families to tap their own personal wealth to help with the ransom efforts, though I know there isn't any wealth to tap.

It's about this time that Jabreel contacts my husband. Jabreel hands me the phone. "This is Jessica," I begin, holding my breath.

"Hey ... uh, Jess, it's Erik. How are you?" He somehow manages to communicate all his concern for me in those few words.

"OK. Um, we're OK." I urge him to confirm that Mohammed is the legitimate negotiator for our two families and tell Abdi that he is working as hard as he can to put together a ran-

“
“I love you,”
I tell Erik when
we finally talk
on the phone.
“And I will get
through this.”

som. Then I tell Jabreel, "Go get Abdi."

I say to Erik, "The leader of the militia is coming so he can hear what you're saying. But before he comes, I just want you to know I love you."

I hear a heavy catch in his voice. "I love you too."

"And I will get through this."

"Good, Jess." His voice is flat. He is obviously in a room full of people.

Abdi stumbles over, eyes puffy from chewing khat. Meanwhile, Jabreel tells Erik, "I am not one of them. I must do what I am told."

Then Abdi listens while Erik assures him the families support Mohammed and the negotiations. Then he calls out, "Jessica! We're praying for you and doing everything we can to get you and Poul back!"

Jabreel hangs up. It is done.

After that call, our captors separate Poul and me, and Jabreel starts making sexual advances. "No, Jabreel," I keep telling him. "I'm married. And so are you." But I have to avoid alienating our main English-speaking communicator. He knows it, and his unwanted attentions grow more insistent every day. Once I awake to find him beside me. His hand is reaching under my blanket and touching my legs. I pull away and turn over.

I imagine being back in the apartment with Erik, mentally moving through the rooms, picturing Erik waiting for me. I daydream about

escaping, slipping away and finding help—but, of course, there is no help.

Two weeks later, they bring Poul back to camp. No explanation—just one day there he is. We try to catch up on what has been going on, but conversation remains difficult around our captors.

One day, there is a faint buzzing sound that seems to come from way up in the air. There is nothing to see, but our captors make certain we're covered by branches overhead.

One night, I open my eyes. The sky is black. There is no moon, and a haze blots out the starlight. It's about 2 a.m. Time for a trip to the bush. The urinary tract infection makes it impossible for me to sleep through the night. I stand and quietly say, "Toilet." I have to get the approval to move off my sleeping mat.

Nobody answers. I stand still and hold my breath to listen. I can hear our guards snoring. I raise my voice a little louder. "Guys. Do you hear me? Toilet?"

Not a peep. They either don't hear me or don't care.

I make my way to the nearest bush. I am alone, everything peaceful and quiet. The darkness feels protective. I fantasize about walking to freedom. There is physical relief when I finish, but the pain stays in my lower abdomen. Escape? Yeah, right.

I pad back to my sleeping mat, lie down on my side, and curl into a ball.



Jessica and Erik now live in Virginia, and they continue their humanitarian work. August, their son, was born in October 2012.

Noises break into my consciousness. Maybe faint animal sounds. A tiny crackling of a twig, one dry branch of a bush scraping across another. What's out there? Am I starting to hallucinate? Each time I start to drift off, there's another little noise. It sounds like beetles coming out of their nests. Before long, I hear the sounds right at the edge of my mat.

At that instant, a Somali leaps to his feet and cocks his rifle. There is a long pause, then gunfire breaks out in every direction. I'm sure I scream, but I can't hear myself above the din. Is another clan coming to steal us or kill us? I silently send out my love to Erik and repeat to myself, Oh, God. Oh, God. Oh, God.

I hear the Somalis screaming orders to one another, then screaming with

the impact of bullets, then screaming in their death throes. Someone shouts, "Oh, no." Then I hear him gasp when the bullets hit him.

Strong hands grab my blanket. I put up a fight to keep it.

"Jessica!" a male voice calls.

It stops me like a slap in the face. An American accent?

The black night hides the faces in front of me. They are like ghosts with deadly weapons. I can't register that these people might be helping me. I struggle and scream with all my strength. Even though I expect to be killed, I fight back out of instinct. Then I hear it.

"Jessica! This is the American military. You're safe. We've come to take you home."

On January 25, 2012, on orders from President Barack Obama, 24 U.S. Navy SEAL special operatives parachuted into Somalia, killed an unknown number of kidnappers, and rescued Jessica Buchanan and Poul Thisted by helicopter.



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INSPIRATION



Can dogs learn from
their misfortune?
Here's one who just
might have.



The Dog Who Became the Dog Whisperer

BY ALISA BOWMAN

*Toefu (near left, with
Juno) has helped a
number of emotionally
distressed rescue dogs.*



AS ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERS POUNDED

on the door to the small, one-story home in Knoxville, Tennessee, invisible fumes wafted up their noses, down their throats, and into their lungs. It was ammonia, the suffocating by-product of waste and decay.

No one answered. The officers muscled the door open. Blocking them was excrement, half a foot thick. Through the small crack, the officers could see filth, a couch covered in cardboard, and a television. *Cheers* was on.

Light streamed into the dark space, illuminating the eyes of countless dogs. The dogs rushed toward the officers. They were frenzied, crawling on top of one another, growling, snapping, and fighting for freedom. The officers yanked the door, trying to close the gap, but dogs squeezed through. Two pushed past the officers and raced off. Officers tackled two more and secured them. They pushed the others back in.

The owners were home. That was obvious. The officers continued to pound on the door and shout through the crack. The fumes were overpowering and unbearable; one officer suffered a heart attack and was hospitalized.

Finally, an elderly woman came to the door. She stepped outside and stood on the lawn, looking shocked and embarrassed as she watched officers don protective suits and breathing apparatuses to enter the home. One by one, the dogs were

noosed with poles and dragged out of the house. Seeing sunlight for the first time, the dogs squinted and pulled back. They were emaciated, some with just hide over bones.

As each dog was brought out, it was numbered.

One ... Two ... Ten ...

Morning gave way to afternoon. *Forty ... Fifty ...*

Darkness began to fall. *Sixty ... Seventy-five.*

The elderly woman and her brother, who lived with her, were charged with aggravated animal cruelty. They were put on probation and agreed to counseling and unannounced home inspections.

The dogs were taken to Young-Williams Animal Center, where veterinarian Becky DeBolt and a team of others treated them for mange, anemia, worms, and dehydration. Most had extra toes on their hind legs; some, a pronounced underbite.

These dogs sure have a short family tree, DeBolt remembers thinking.

This was especially true for dog number 16, who looked like a cross between Gomer Pyle and a vampire bat. The brown spaniel trembled, her ears

back and tail tucked, as volunteers shaved her matted fur. By the time they finished, the dog was bald except for her head, her paws, and the tip of her tail.

"She looked ridiculous," DeBolt says.

Three weeks later, number 16 and 48 other dogs had been nursed back to health. The rest were in such bad shape, they were put down. But important questions remained. Who would adopt a dog that couldn't stand being leashed or repeatedly threw up from fear? Could the dogs be house-trained? Allow themselves to be petted and cuddled? No one at Young-Williams knew the answers, so they asked the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) for help.

When ASPCA animal behaviorist Kristen Collins walked into Young-Williams, her presence set off the dogs. Their barking was deafening. She walked past run after run, eventually coming to the one occupied by dog number 16. The Gomer Pyle spaniel was asleep in a tight ball on top of a larger dog.

"She didn't even look like a dog," remembers Collins. "She looked more like an Ewok from Star Wars. I'd never seen such a pitiful-looking animal."

Dog number 16 lifted her head. Her eyes focused on Collins.



*Kristen Collins
with dog
number 16
(later renamed
Toefu) soon
after her
rescue*

No, she told herself. Don't even think about it. No.

No turned into yes, and a few days later, Collins carried the spaniel to her car for the ten-hour drive home to Illinois. She named her adopted dog Toefu, symbolic of the spaniel's extra toes.

For a year, Toefu's entire world had been walls, squalor, and other dogs. She'd never even seen grass. So Collins drove Toefu, along with Juno (the pit bull she'd adopted years earlier from a vet tech) and Wink (a Border collie from a shelter), to a secluded park. Toefu fearfully plastered her body to Juno's. Slowly, she lowered her nose to the ground and inhaled the fresh scent of grass for the first time. Her entire demeanor changed—her tail shot up, and joy seemed to course through every cell of her body.

Collins helped Toefu overcome other anxieties. She was petrified of

cars, so each day, Collins placed dog food closer to her car. Soon, Toefu climbed into the motionless vehicle to eat. Then she tolerated a ride around the block. Collins did the same with the other things Toefu feared—the blender, the vacuum, umbrellas, even small children.

In just a year, Toefu was behaving like a typical dog. Each morning, she woke, exploded out of her crate, and wiggled her entire body with enthusiasm. Whenever Collins opened the back door, Toefu raced outside, scooped up a deflated soccer ball with her teeth, and fiercely shook it back and forth as the ball made loud thwapping noises. When she wanted attention, she'd bound up to Collins, place a paw on Collins's chest, and lightly tap her face with the other paw.

Phase one of Toefu's restoration was complete.

A YEAR LATER, IN 2013, Collins moved to Madison, New Jersey, to take a challenging job overseeing the new ASPCA Behavioral Rehabilitation Center. Shelters around the country sent her their most fearful rescue dogs. One was named Hillary.

On the floor of the center, the blue-brindled Chihuahua trembled, her eyes enormous, her brow furrowed, her mouth gaping as if she couldn't

get enough air. She darted to the left of the center's vestibule. Reaching the end of her leash, she jerked back, then raced to the right, frantically trying to escape.

“**Toefu continued to connect with the Chihuahua, lounging on the floor as the other dog dive-bombed her.**”

The Chihuahua had been rescued from hoarders who'd kept her and 19 other dogs in an outside pen, isolated from the rest of the world. The most traumatized of her pack, she was feral and showed no signs of being able to bond with humans.

For six weeks after her arrival, Hillary barked and snapped at her handlers. She cowered in the farthest corner of her run, refused to eat if people were nearby, and, when someone touched her, abruptly flattened herself onto the ground as if she'd been hit with a bat. “She was crashing and burning,” says Collins. “We were stalled.”

Then Collins had an idea.

She moved Hillary out of her run and into a small penned-in area in the office. Because dogs rescued from hoarders feel more comfortable when surrounded by a pack, Collins brought Toefu, Wink, and Juno to work one day and left them in the office with Hillary.

Later that day, Collins checked on the dogs. Toefu bounded over, wagged her entire back end, and snaked her body around Collins's legs and torso.

"How are you?" Collins sang to the dog.

Collins glanced at the back of the crate, assuming she'd see Hillary's trembling body through the slats. But the space usually occupied by the terrified dog was empty.

Her eyes shifted forward to the front of the crate. There was Hillary, peeking out, watching.

Toefu continued to wag and wiggle her body.

Hillary walked to the edge of her wire pen.

Toefu thumped her tail against the floor.

Hillary's tail began to wag.

Then, from Hillary's mouth, came a strange high-pitched yodel. It sounded as if the dog were singing.

Toefu continued to connect with Hillary, often passively lounging on the ground as the Chihuahua dive-bombed her, nipped her ears, and raced over and around her body. Other times, Toefu curled up next to Hillary, wrapping her larger body around the tiny, shivering dog. At any point, Toefu could have dominated her. Instead, Toefu remained low to the ground and moved slowly, allowing Hillary the upper hand. When Hillary fled under the couch, Toefu pawed the ground but never pursued. She let Hillary come to her.

"Rehabilitation is about making decisions about when to pay attention to these dogs and when to give them space," says Collins. "The same

is true during interactions among dogs. Toefu makes these social decisions easily, seemingly intuiting what these dogs need."

One day, as Collins knelt to greet Toefu, a little nose emerged from under the couch. Then a whole head. Then a whole body.

Hillary tentatively walked toward Collins. Just inches away, she stiffened, pulled her ears back, and walked back toward the couch. Toefu continued to soak up Collins's attention, her tail happily thumping against the floor. Hillary did another about-face, tentatively creeping toward Collins again. Then, as before, she retreated. And that was it for the day.

A few days later, Collins was sitting on the ground with Toefu stretched out on her lap. Hillary approached Collins, but this time, she didn't pull back. Toefu reached her front legs toward Hillary, pawing her. The Chihuahua's ears perked up. She pawed Toefu back. Toefu stretched her jaw wide. Hillary did the same. The two dogs emitted guttural growling sounds. Now their heads were side by side, pushing each other back and forth, as Hillary happily emitted her high-pitched yodeling sound.

Collins's hand was just inches from Hillary. Would Hillary let her touch her? Collins slowly moved her hand closer. Hillary's body remained relaxed, her focus on Toefu.

Now closer.

Collins could feel the dog's fur against the back of her hand. The dogs pressed their heads together, pushing each other from side to side and back and forth.

Collins slowly edged her hand up Hillary's back. The dogs continued to growl and paw each other.

Collins slid her hand under Hillary's collar and scratched. Hillary abruptly stopped. She looked confused. Then "she got this dreamy, squinty, this-feels-so-good look in her eyes," Collins says. "It was magical, and it would not have been possible without Toefu."

PARTLY BECAUSE of where Toefu came from and partly despite it, her gentle but persistent manner and

intuitive understanding have helped not just Hillary but other dogs who have come to the ASPCA rehab center.

"People say that dogs live in the present," says Collins. "But they also make associations, and some of Toefu's earliest associations came from living in crowded conditions with some 75 other dogs. She had a very large family, and she knew a lot about them. Had she not learned to artfully read their body language, she might not have survived, and she might not be the dog whisperer that she is today." **R**

Hillary is currently in a foster home. To find out how to adopt her or other dogs from the ASPCA Behavioral Rehabilitation Center, e-mail behavior.rehab@aspca.org.

WHAT FUNNY PEOPLE DRINK ON SAINT PATRICK'S DAY

I'm making wine at home, but I'm making it out of raisins so it'll be aged automatically.

STEVEN WRIGHT

NyQuil on the rocks, for when you're feeling sick but sociable.

MITCH HEDBURG

One martini is all right, two is too many, three is not enough.

JAMES THURBER

Love makes the world go round ...
Whiskey makes it go twice as fast.

COMPTON MACKENZIE

Laugh Lines

SPRING CLEANING

Stoop sale this Sunday, 12 to 4 p.m.
Throwing all my crap in the
garbage this Sunday, 4:15 p.m.

🐦 RITCH DUNCAN @RITCHIED

I used to date a hoarder, and
she broke up with me. That
stings extra hard—I'm like the
one thing she can get rid of.

SAM MORRIL

You know it's time to do the laundry
when you dry off with a sneaker.

ZACH GALIFIANAKIS

Oh man, just did some serious
cleaning in here. You could
totally eat off this table.

🐦 MATTHEW O'BRIEN @MATTOB34

My kitchen floor is sticky, and
I had to do something about it.
So finally I went out and bought
some slippers.

SARAH SILVERMAN

Febreze air fresheners: for people
who are like, "Cover a smell instead
of cleaning it? Yes, I'm OK with that."

🐦 ERIN WHITEHEAD @GIRLWITHATAIL



These genius inventions bring hope
and possibility to millions

6 WAYS TO Save THE World

#1

BIG PROBLEM

A Tiring Task

In many rural areas, women and girls are typically the ones who shoulder the arduous, time-consuming, and dangerous job of gathering water, often located far from their homes, which means they must forgo school and employment.

SIMPLE SOLUTION

Water Wheels

Two South African brothers, Hans and Piet Hendrikse, created the Q Drum from super-sturdy polyethylene so that it can be rolled or pulled across the bumpiest terrain without springing a leak. The Q Drum holds up to 13 gallons of water and can also be used to transport grain and other foods.

Purify water

Detect cancer

Clean up cooking

Transport water

Prevent infections

Improve births





#2 **BIG PROBLEM** Unsafe H₂O

One in nine people around the globe lacks access to clean drinking water, and as a result, more than 3.4 million end up dying every year from diseases—like diarrhea and typhoid—related to polluted water, ineffective sanitation, and poor hygiene. The youngest are most at risk: Some two million of the victims are children.

SIMPLE SOLUTION

A Smart Straw

The LifeStraw is a portable filter that eliminates 99.9 percent of all waterborne bacteria and parasites. Invented by the Swiss company Vestergaard, each straw can clean up to 264 gallons of water. The device has already been distributed in more than 64 countries.

#3 **BIG PROBLEM** Cancer Epidemic

Cervical cancer remains the leading cause of cancer deaths among women in developing countries, due to a dearth of both trained medical professionals and easy, affordable ways to screen for the disease.



SIMPLE SOLUTION

A Vinegar Test

Scientists have devised a diagnostic technique that relies on common vinegar and requires minimal training to administer, and it has been shown to reduce cervical-cancer deaths by nearly one third. Jhpiego, a nonprofit organization affiliated with Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, is now working to make the test available worldwide.

#4 **BIG PROBLEM** Toxic Cooking

Meal preparation can be a deadly chore in the developing world. About half the planet's population still cooks with solid fuels like dung, coal, and wood, and the air pollution from these sources is thought to lead to more than four million premature deaths a year.

SIMPLE SOLUTION A Green Stove

African Clean Energy, a South African company, has invented a stove that works more efficiently (using 70 percent less fuel) and cleanly (creating 95 percent fewer harmful emissions) than traditional methods. The battery-powered appliance recharges via a solar panel, and it has a USB port to power cell phones and laptops.



#5 **BIG PROBLEM** Lethal Home Births

Every day around the world, an estimated 800 women die from infections and hemorrhages incurred from childbirth or pregnancy complications. Many of the deaths occur in areas where births happen at home without medical care.

SIMPLE SOLUTION

A Basic Safety Kit

Bangladesh has had one of the world's highest maternal mortality rates, so the nonprofit organization BRAC created a low-cost solution: a 40-cent home-delivery kit that contains gauze, disinfecting carbolic soap, a sterile plastic sheet, a thread (to tie off the umbilical cord), and a surgical blade (to cut it). BRAC has distributed more than 2.6 million kits, which are credited with helping to reduce the maternal mortality rate by over 50 percent in the past decade.



#6

BIG PROBLEM

Unhygienic Periods

In Rwanda, 18 percent of menstruating girls and women miss, on average, 35 days of school and work each year because they cannot afford sanitary pads. To avoid skipping, some of them resort to unsafe alternatives like rags, leaves, and mud, which can lead to infections and other diseases.

SIMPLE SOLUTION

An Inexpensive Maxi Pad

Sustainable Health Enterprises (SHE), based in Rwanda and founded by Harvard Business School graduate Elizabeth Scharpf, makes pads from banana-tree fibers; the pads cost three cents apiece. SHE buys the material, which is usually discarded, from two female-led banana cooperatives.

LEARN MORE, DO MORE

- When you purchase a LifeStraw (buylifestraw.com), Vestergaard distributes a portion of the proceeds to fund water purifiers in a developing country.
- To learn about contributing to a Q Drum project, e-mail info@qdrum.co.za.
- African Clean Energy is giving its cookstoves to families headed by orphans in Lesotho. To find out more, go to africancleanenergy.com.
- BRAC runs a variety of social, economic, and health-related programs in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. To read about its efforts, visit bracusa.org.
- A donation of \$100 can provide maxi pads to keep 140 girls in school for a year. Go to sheinnovates.com for more information.
- Jhpiego aids women and kids worldwide; read about its work at jhpigo.org. **R**

THE STRANGER WHO CHANGED MY LIFE



On one of my darkest days, my seatmate's wise words were a ray of light

The Man Next to Me

BY HODA KOTB AS TOLD TO DIANE CLEHANE

IN MARCH 2007, I was recovering from major surgery for breast cancer and going through a divorce. It was a terrible time, and I was spending most of my days at home keeping everything to myself. Then my *Today* show colleague Matt Lauer threw me a lifeline by asking whether I felt well enough to tape a "Where in the World?" segment.

"Why don't you pick a couple of days and go to Ireland and escape?" he suggested kindly. I thought it would be a great way to forget about it all, so I jumped at the chance.

The trip was fun because I was living in the moment, but by the time I got on the plane to go home, I wasn't feeling well. My plan was to curl up in a ball and sleep for the entire flight. I had my earbuds in my hand; they were an inch away from going in when the guy next to me turned to me and said, "Hi. Howya doin'?"

I thought, Oh no.

Then he said, "I recognize you from somewhere."

"I work on the *Today* show," I told him, still holding my earbuds.

He smiled at me. "How's Matt? Is Matt nice?"

"Yeah," I said. "Matt's nice."

"How's Al? Al seems funny."

All I wanted to do was sleep, but he had kind eyes and looked like a good-hearted guy. So we continued making small talk.

Then he noticed I was wearing a compression sleeve on my arm and asked, "What is that?"

I told him I'd had a "procedure" and needed the sleeve to fly, hoping we could change the subject.

But he continued, "What procedure did you have?"

"I had an operation," I said vaguely. He was still curious, so I finally said, "I had breast cancer. But, boy, I hope

that's not the first thing you think of when you get off this flight, telling your kids, 'Hey, I sat next to this girl with breast cancer.'"

He paused for a moment and then said, "What's wrong with that? Breast cancer is part of you, like going to college or getting married."

I could feel my eyes filling up.

"Let me give you some advice: Don't hog your journey. It's not just for you," he said. "Think of how many people you could help."

I had tears coming down my face, and I said to him, "I can't believe I'm crying in front of you. I don't even know you."

"Look, you have a choice in life," he said. "You can either put your stuff deep in your pockets and take it to your grave, or you can help someone."

Even though I'm on a show where we're pretty open, I was really struggling then. I've always been a very private person, and aside from the few people who needed to know, I'd kept

my illness secret. I didn't want to be defined by my weakness.

But this man, whose name was Ken Duane, showed me that my illness gave me strength—because it gave me the ability to lighten someone else's load. I decided at that moment that I was going to share my story publicly.

Later that year, I talked about my illness and my conversation with Ken on air with Ann Curry.

Years later, a producer who used to work on our show mentioned that her boyfriend was in charge of an event, and she thought I knew the honoree. It was Ken.

He and I hadn't seen each other since we'd

met on the plane, but Ken's best friend wound up contacting me and asking me to help present Ken with a Father of the Year award at a luncheon in New York. Ken was sitting there grinning as I said, "He's touched a lot of people's lives. He obviously touched a stranger like me."

Everything came full circle a few years ago when he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. He called me and said he now understood what it felt like. I told him it seemed as if he'd always understood: It's better to share and heal than to try to hide away.

He is healthy now, and I am forever grateful that I never got that transatlantic nap.

“
***This man
showed me that
my illness gave
me the ability to
lighten someone
else's load.***”



HODA KOTB
*is a cohost of
Today's fourth hour
and a correspondent
for Dateline NBC.*



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Into a New Millennium

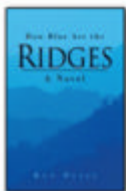
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Sleep deprivation now rivals obesity and smoking as our greatest public health crisis. Experts warn it's making us sick, fat, and stupid. But there's hope.

Sounding the Alarm on Sleep

BY BETH WEINHOUSE

IT WAS JUST BEFORE DAWN on a Saturday morning, and most of the 32 passengers on a tour bus traveling from a Connecticut casino to New York City were fast asleep. Suddenly, the riders were jolted awake as the bus struck the right-hand guardrail at 64 mph, almost 15 mph over the speed limit. The vehicle flipped on its side and skidded more than the length of two football fields before hitting a signpost that sheared off the top half of the bus like a tin can. Fifteen people on board died. The others were injured, many seriously.



The driver claimed he'd been clipped by a passing tractor trailer, but a National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigation found that he'd fallen asleep at the wheel. "It was a fatigue accident," says Mark R. Rosekind, PhD, a sleep expert and an NTSB member. The NTSB found that the driver hadn't slept for more than three hours in a row in the 72 hours preceding the crash.

Traffic accidents related to fatigue are disturbingly common. They tend to make headlines either when the fatalities are very high—as with the March 2011 accident described above—or when there is a celebrity involved, as with the accident that injured comedian Tracy Morgan last June. The truck driver involved in Morgan's accident is being charged with vehicular homicide, and the prosecutor alleges that the driver was awake for more than 24 hours preceding the crash. (The driver, who has pleaded not guilty, denies that he was sleep-deprived.) The NTSB estimates that fatigue contributes to as many as a quarter of all transportation accidents—whether car, bus, truck, train, or plane.

That statistic sounds shocking, but experts have known the truth for years: The nation is in the midst of a sleep crisis. In fact, in 2011, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) declared insufficient sleep a public health epidemic—a warning on par with those released about

tobacco decades ago. "Sleep-deprived is the new normal, like smoking was in the 1950s," says Russell Sanna, PhD, former executive director of the Division of Sleep Medicine at Harvard Medical School. Fifty years ago, even doctors smoked, and it took the surgeon general and an enormous public health campaign to convince people that the habit could be deadly.

Sleep Deficits—They Hurt In Surprising Ways

According to the National Sleep Foundation, everyone, with few exceptions, needs seven to nine hours of sleep a night in order for the body and mind to function optimally. But a CDC survey found that more than a third of adults reported less than seven hours of sleep during a typical 24-hour period. Other experts believe the numbers are even more alarming. "Some of the latest polls show that nearly three quarters of the adult population is not getting the recommended amount of sleep," says James Maas, PhD, former chair of the psychology department at Cornell University and author of *Sleep for Success*.

Transportation is the most obvious area where sleepiness exacts a terrible toll—the National Department of Transportation estimates that drowsy driving is responsible for 1,550 fatalities and 40,000 nonfatal injuries every year in the United States—but it's hardly the only one. Every aspect of our lives is affected by our sleep,

from our health to our relationships to our work performance. Sanna puts it bluntly: "Lack of sleep makes us sick, fat, and stupid."

Sick ... because insufficient sleep has been linked to hypertension, diabetes, depression, and early death. Last year, researchers from the University of Chicago published a report showing that poor-quality sleep can speed the growth of cancer and hamper the immune system's ability to fight off abnormal cells in mice.

mice, but researchers believe the results may apply to humans too.

Recent research at the University of Rochester shows that during sleep, the brain appears to conduct physiological maintenance, clearing itself of the junk that accumulates in cells during the day as a by-product of thinking. When someone doesn't get the optimal amount of sleep, the system backs up, and the chemical waste accumulates. The resulting garbage pileup may be why insufficient sleep



During sleep, the brain conducts maintenance, clearing itself of chemical waste products.

Fat ... because lack of sleep causes metabolic changes that can lead to weight gain plus hormonal changes that can increase hunger and cognitive changes that can make it difficult to resist that slice of cake. In 2012, researchers at the University of Colorado found that losing just a few hours of sleep for a few nights in a row can lead to extra pounds.

Stupid ... because not getting enough sleep affects memory, concentration, reaction time, judgment, and decision making. Last March, University of Pennsylvania researchers found that just three consecutive nights of four to five hours of sleep could lead to irreversible brain cell damage. The study was done with

has also been linked to an increased risk of Alzheimer's and other types of dementia.

Danger: Sleepy Doctors

Flavio Casoy, MD, remembers a particularly frightening moment during his medical internship. As he recounted to the *Washington Post*, he'd been on duty at a San Francisco hospital for nearly 29 hours. He was at the bedside of a very sick patient when the man's oxygen level began to plummet. Dr. Casoy simply stared at the monitor, transfixed. "I knew something was wrong, but I couldn't make myself think," he recalled. Only after another doctor entered the room and said, "Get going,"

did the exhausted doctor spring into action.

Dr. Casoy's case may be an extreme example of the dangers of sleep deprivation, but risks are all around us. "Sleep is private behavior that has public consequences," says Sanna. It may not be a tragedy if the supermarket checkout clerk yawns and takes a few seconds longer to ring up your groceries. But what if your surgeon, your pilot, your child's school bus driver, is tired? What about the technician reading your biopsy? What

insurance premiums and health-care costs). And while you should do your part to sleep more, you'll need help from the rest of society to really effect change.

The first challenge is getting companies to recognize sleep debt as a liability at a time when hard work is often synonymous with sending e-mails at 2 a.m. or volunteering for a night shift. "In our world, sleep has been seen as the enemy of capitalism," says Sanna. "If you're not working, you're not generating income."



Individuals' lack of sleep makes the workforce less productive, less safe, and more expensive.

about the factory worker assembling your lawn mower or your car?

A 2003 study done at Henry Ford Hospital showed that losing two hours of sleep in one night—for instance, sleeping six hours instead of eight—had an effect on performance equivalent to drinking two to three beers. "Our entire nation has the potential for impaired performance," says Rosekind. And a sleep-deprived workforce has a profoundly negative effect on the economy.

If lack of sleep makes individuals sick, fat, and stupid, it makes the workforce less productive, less safe, and more expensive (because of lost productivity, accidents, and increased

But sleep experts say that that attitude is simply wrong. "Any work you do after 16 hours of being awake is a recipe for mistakes and accidents," says Maas.

We may think we're getting away with shaving small amounts of sleep off the recommended hours each night, but research shows otherwise. A study of how workers function the day after daylight saving time, when they've lost an average of 40 minutes of sleep because of the time change, had surprising results. "That amount of lost sleep was tied to a spike in workplace injuries," says Christopher Barnes, PhD, assistant professor of management at the University of

Washington and an expert on workplace sleep and fatigue.

Social scientists have found that a phenomenon called presenteeism, in which workers show up for their jobs but are incapable of doing productive work, costs the U.S. economy over \$63 billion in lost productivity. One technological subset of presenteeism has been dubbed cyberloafing, when in many cases sleep-deprived office workers, unable to concentrate, surf the Web or check their personal e-mail during work hours. "You go to YouTube and look at videos of cute kittens playing in paper bags," says Barnes, whose research found a direct correlation between lack of sleep and logging of time on entertainment websites.

Barnes's research also found that sleep deprivation leads to unethical decisions, such as cheating or stealing in the workplace. For instance, in one study, students who were deprived of sleep were much more likely to cheat and overreport their performance on a test in order to gain an advantage in a drawing for a cash prize. "In order to behave ethically, we have to be able to resist temptation," he explains. "When you're short on sleep, your ability to exert self-control declines, and you might cave in to temptation." The result of unethical behavior and lowered productivity is inevitably passed on to the rest of us. "There are higher costs for consumers when there are accidents or when defective

products go out the door because people aren't assembling them as they should," says Maas.

How We Got So Tired

You could say that Thomas Edison started this epidemic. With the invention of the lightbulb and the possibility of "daylight" anytime, society moved away from its natural dusk-to-dawn sleeping patterns. But until recently, there were still checks in place. "In the days of black-and-white television, a test pattern would come on-screen when the programming was done," says Sanna. "That was a signal that it was time to disengage and go to sleep. We've lost those boundaries between wake and sleep, work and home."

The difference between when our natural body clocks want us to sleep and what we have on our social/family/work schedules has been called social jet lag, a widespread phenomenon of people being out of sync with their biorhythms because the demands of their lives intrude. Instead of sleeping and waking with the sun, we stay up way after dark and wake before dawn. Says Maas, "When there's not enough time in the day to get everything done, you cheat on your sleep."

But social jet lag, unlike the jet lag you suffer when you travel, can be an almost permanent state. "People do more and more things at odd hours," says David Dinges, PhD, professor of psychiatry and chief of the sleep and chronobiology lab at the University of

Pennsylvania School of Medicine. “Our lifestyle is increasingly chronochaotic.”

Today, technology is further eroding our natural biological sleep patterns, says Dinges. “We’ve created a kind of social hypervigilance with technology that interferes with our biological timing. We’re constantly wondering, What e-mail did I just get? What’s on Twitter?” he explains.

The New Era of Sleep

When it became clear that smoking was detrimental to our health, the then surgeon general, Luther L. Terry, issued an urgent report, and in 1965, Congress mandated health warnings on cigarette packs. Five years later, cigarette ads were banned from television and radio.

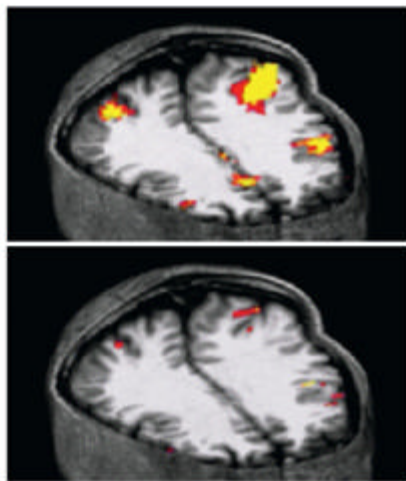
Sleep deprivation doesn’t yet have such a major push behind it, but the CDC, Harvard University, and the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) are taking steps to sound the alarm. In November 2013, the CDC and AASM announced the National Healthy Sleep Awareness Project, which will aim to increase the public’s knowledge of sleep health and sleep disorders and to educate health professionals so they can promote healthy sleep too. “Sleep health hasn’t gotten into the general conversation, and that’s what we need to keep hammering,” AASM president M. Safwan Badr, MD, told huffingtonpost.com.

Experts at Harvard Medical School’s

Division of Sleep Medicine have been promoting the Sleep Matters Initiative, a partnership with corporations, businesses, and employers to promote a well-rested workforce. The aim, says Sanna, who spearheaded the initiative, is to spread the word that sleep is the third pillar of health, after exercise and nutrition. “But it’s not like exercise and diet, where you might see results a month to two months later,” says Sanna. “If you sleep well one night, you’ll feel it the next morning.”

Even corporations are waking up to the fact that a rested workforce is more productive. Google was seen as a pioneer years ago when it installed nap pods in its headquarters, but more companies now offer tired employees alternatives to cyberloafing. Since 2007, Arianna Huffington, editor-in-chief of huffingtonpost.com, has become a self-proclaimed “sleep evangelist” after she fainted in her office, hit her head on her desk, broke her cheekbone, and required five stitches around her eye. She blamed her accident on lack of sleep. “It got me thinking about what kind of life I was living,” she’s written.

Huffington now tries to get seven or eight hours of sleep a night—she reads an actual book in bed and doesn’t allow electronic devices like phones and readers into the bedroom. She’s tried to promote that message to her employees too. “What I say to people here is, ‘Once you leave the office, unless there’s an emergency, you’re off.’”



MRI scans of brain function after a full night's sleep (top) and after less sleep

Johnson & Johnson, a global behemoth with nearly 130,000 employees worldwide, encourages healthy sleep through comprehensive programs including Web-based digital health coaching and provides energy rooms for relaxation in some of its facilities. "It's a very holistic approach," says Fikry Isaac, MD, vice president of global health services for J&J. One message sent to employees from the J&J North American Leadership Team was blunt: "Very simply, do not send e-mails on weekends. If something urgent arises, place a phone call or text."

The most common strategy employers are using to combat workplace fatigue is to offer sleep-hygiene courses, taught by an increasing legion of sleep experts who come at

the problem from various disciplines: medicine, psychology, business. Recognizing that getting their employees to sleep more at home will help them perform better at work, top corporations are bringing these experts in to preach the gospel of sleep to their employees. James Maas, for instance, who now works as a sleep lecturer and consultant, has been hired by Goldman Sachs, IBM, Citigroup, Apple, the U.S. Navy, Johnson & Johnson, Pepsi-Cola, and many others.

Eric Severson, senior vice president of global talent solutions for Gap Inc., in San Francisco, used to sleep just six hours a night. He thought it was normal that he occasionally dozed off in meetings. Then Gap's human resources department brought Maas in to speak at an executive development event, where he talked about how a lack of sleep negatively affects performance.

He used MRI scans (above left) to show the difference in brain activity following a good night's sleep and an inadequate one—the tired brain is dim, while the well-rested one is lit up like a Christmas tree.

Severson was convinced. As he told a publication for HR professionals, "Once I started getting seven hours of sleep, I was significantly more engaged and alert during my workday. Getting adequate sleep makes you more emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually resilient," he said. "It links to everything else." **R**



Classic Diet Advice (You Can Probably Ignore)

BY SHAUN DREISBACH

1 Don't Lose Weight Quickly

Many experts have chided that losing weight too fast means you won't keep off the pounds over time.

"Yet it's not true," says David Allison, PhD, director of the Nutrition Obesity Research Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). "In clinical trials, rapid initial weight loss is associated with lower body mass long-term." For example, a University of Florida study compared people who lost weight quickly (one and a half pounds a week for the first month), slowly (half a pound a week), and moderately (somewhere between these two amounts). Participants in the fast-weight-loss group lost more weight overall and were five times more likely to have kept it off 18 months later than those in the slow group.

■ **THE NEW ADVICE:** Drastically cutting calories or doing some crazy cayenne-pepper-and-cardboard diet isn't healthy, of course. But slow and steady isn't the only option. "Some people get more motivated when they lose a lot of weight right off the bat," Allison says. Do what works for you. Just don't dip below about 1,200 calories a day (men may need more).

2 Always Eat Breakfast

Heck, even the surgeon general and first lady want us to start the day with a healthy breakfast. But UAB researchers discovered scant evidence of trials that have tested whether breakfast helps people lose weight. The few that did found that skipping it has little or no effect.

A 2002 study of people in the National Weight Control Registry (a database of more than 10,000 people who have lost at least 30 pounds and kept it off for a year or more) found that 78 percent of successful dieters regularly have a morning meal. Experts have interpreted this to

mean that breakfast helps the formerly overweight stay slim, but the research doesn't show that.

"The only way to prove that is to have a bunch of men and women skip breakfast and see if they gain weight," says David Levitsky, PhD, a professor of nutrition and psychology at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. But when he and his colleague recently did just that, the results were quite surprising. They found that people who skipped breakfast wound up eating an average of 450 fewer calories by the end of the day than when they ate breakfast.

**“
Cut 200
calories a day
and lose
20 pounds
a year?
Scientists don't
think so ...**

■ **THE NEW ADVICE:** While there are many healthy reasons to start your day with breakfast (see page 58), don't feel like you have to eat a morning meal if you're not hungry or you're trying to lose a few pounds. A nutritional SWAT team will not show up at your door, and it may help fast-track weight loss.

3 Eating at Home Is Always Better than Eating Out

"For years, we thought that calories from foods and drinks away from home—giant sodas, fast-food burgers, vending machine snacks—comprised a major portion of calories in our diets," says Adam Drewnowski, PhD, director of the Center for Public Health Nutrition at the University of Washington in Seattle. But people may have been misinterpreting the numbers. About 35 percent of the amount of money we *spend* on food and drinks happens in restaurants—because eating out is generally more expensive than dining at home. That got incorrectly equated to the percentage of calories we get from eating out, says Drewnowski.

A study he recently conducted found that meals at fast-food and full-service restaurants accounted for only 17 to 26 percent of our total calorie consumption. "Soda bought from these spots provided about 1 percent of dietary calories, and vending machine foods accounted

for almost zero," says Drewnowski. Up to 76 percent of the calories in our diets hail from food bought at grocery, convenience, and specialty stores—then eaten at home.

■ **THE NEW ADVICE:** "Take a hard look at your grocery bill," suggests Drewnowski. "Stores often give an itemized list, which means you can see where the major sources of calories are." You should have a balance of produce, lean protein, and whole grains and minimal refined or packaged foods.

4 Small Changes Add Up!

Nutrition scientists today know that equations like this don't work in real life: Cut 200 calories a day, and you'll lose 20 pounds in a year. As your body shrinks, you don't need or burn as many calories. "Say I weigh 150 pounds, and I burn an extra 100 calories a day going for a walk. After 35 days, I should be down 3,500 calories—or a pound. In 365 days, it should be more than ten pounds," explains Allison. "But as I get lighter, it no longer takes 100 calories to move my body. If it did, ten years from now, I'll have lost 100 pounds. How is that even possible?"

■ **THE NEW ADVICE:** At some point, little things won't be enough to keep up weight loss. Commit to change: In addition to a daily walk, you may need to shave a few

hundred calories by, say, nixing the cheese on your sandwich or the side of rice with your stir-fry.

5 Big, Ambitious Weight-Loss Goals Set You Up for Failure

Such a behemoth goal as “I want to go from a size 14 to a 2” is doomed from the get-go, we’ve always believed. Better to set the bar lower (“I want to lose ten pounds and go from there”) so you can actually clear it, right? “The logic here goes that if you have too-high expectations, you’ll get frustrated and discouraged and drop out of your weight-loss program,” says Allison. “But big-goal setters are no more

likely to drop out than those who make smaller ones—and there’s some evidence that they may do even better.” A University of Minnesota study found that women who set weight-loss goals that the researchers deemed unrealistic were more likely to achieve their ideal BMIs than those who chose more “reasonable” goals.

■ **THE NEW ADVICE:** Small goals can provide a motivating sense of accomplishment as you tick each one off. But don’t be afraid to go after a big number. “It’s helpful to have some optimism,” says Allison. The key: having specific steps to achieve it, such as exercising five days a week and cutting portions. **R**



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Dave, Electrician, Mackinac Bridge Authority

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13 Things Mayors Won't Tell You

BY MICHELLE CROUCH

1 You really can change our minds. A well-informed citizen who gets up and speaks at a meeting on an issue can be very compelling. But you have to be well-informed. And you have to do it in a respectful manner. Don't get up and start calling us a bunch of bozos or berate us.

2 In small cities, residents are always telling us they want certain stores and restaurants to come to town. Well, so do I. But I can't wave a magic wand and suddenly make an Olive Garden appear. It's a free country, and retailers get to choose where they want to locate.

3 The politics can be very petty and sometimes mean-spirited. The council wasn't happy when I got elected, so the first vote they took was to take the reserved parking space away from me. It was the height of immaturity.

4 It's easier to pass a \$20 million water-treatment project than it is to spend a few thousand dollars on new laptop computers for the police squad cars. People's eyes tend to



glaze over when you review the details of a big project. But small costs are a lot easier to grasp, so people jump all over them and the money.

5 In most cities, whether you elect a Republican or Democrat makes very little difference. Most of our responsibilities—ensuring the streets are plowed, the parks are in good condition, and the library stays open—are nuts-and-bolts issues, and there's no partisanship in them.

6 I'm not as powerful as you think. If your town has a council-manager form of government, I don't actually run your city—the city manager does. And most policy decisions come down to a vote from the full council. All I can do is lead them in the right direction.

7 People are always surprised when they see me out grocery shopping. They'll say, "Oh, you do your own shopping?" Well, what do you think? I'm just a regular guy who cares about the community.

8 One of my favorite moments was when we had a shelter open because we had houses without power and heat. One family was really worrying about the dog they'd left at home, but the public works department wasn't letting any cars on the road. So I said, "Hop in," and I drove them up to their house.

They were able to take their dog back to the shelter, and they were so appreciative.

9 If you have an idea, bring it to me. The cool thing about being mayor is that, unlike at the state and national levels, you can make a decision and often see concrete results.

10 When it comes down to it, most people fear change. Many projects that people hate at first—the ones they complain loudest about—end up being much loved after they're built. Some of our most controversial projects are now icons that everyone in the city is proud of.

11 We never tell residents that the mayor is on vacation. Even when I really am on vacation, my staff will shut my office door and simply say the mayor is unavailable.

12 Taxes are always too high. No matter where I go or whom I talk to, that's the first thing people say. The second thing they do is list all the things we need. But those things cost money.

13 In some states, we can legally marry people. That's a lot of fun, one of the best perks of the job. **R**

Sources: Andy Berke, mayor of Chattanooga, Tennessee; Alex Morse, mayor of Holyoke, Massachusetts; Alex Torpey, mayor of South Orange, New Jersey; Don Ness, mayor of Duluth, Minnesota; Richard Martin, former mayor of Sarasota, Florida; Gary C. Smith, former mayor of Galesburg, Illinois; Maria Harkey, former mayor of West Milford, New Jersey

Strange Facts About Symbols You See Everywhere

BY BRANDON SPECKTOR

Has a Name You'd Never Guess

Depending on when you were born, you probably know the # symbol as a pound sign, a number sign, or, for the Twitter junkies among us, a hashtag. Turns out, none of those names are right: According to an engineer at Bell Labs (formerly part of AT&T), which made the symbol mainstream via its touch-tone telephones in 1968, that little hex is called an octothorpe.

The *octo* logically describes the symbol's eight points. As for the *thorpe*? Some theories say it comes from the Old English word for *village* (*thorp*), referencing the hex's appearance of eight little fields surrounding a central square; others say the Bell

researchers were just really big fans of the late Olympian Jim Thorpe and needed a cool-sounding syllable to finish their new word.

@ Has Hilarious Names Around the World

A Dutchman calls it a monkey's tail, while an Israeli insists it's a strudel. They aren't bantering about some new simian-themed bakery; they're just describing the @. Though shorthand use of the @ dates back to the 16th century, it took English speakers a remarkably long time to settle on a name. Today, we know it as the "at mark" or "commercial at" and are most used to seeing it in e-mail addresses. Meanwhile, the rest of the world was inventing brilliant



descriptors, like the “little dog” (Russian), the “small snail” (Italian), and the straight-up “crazy A” (Bosnian).

! Was a Big Pain to Type

Though the exclamation point has helped express strong feelings on paper since the 15th century, this upstanding punctuation mark didn't get its own dedicated typewriter key until the 1970s. Before then, typists who wanted to use interjections in their work had to type a period, then backspace and type an apostrophe atop it. Secretarial manuals of the '50s called this Franken-symbol a “bang”—not to be confused with an “interrobang,” which is an exclamation point overlapping with a question mark to indicate incredulity. Can you believe we stopped using this?

¶ Was a Work of Art Before It Turned Invisible

Before printed type, the paragraph mark (or pilcrow) was not only essential punctuation but also a medieval style icon. In the Middle Ages, there were no standards for indenting paragraphs or using line breaks to indicate a change in topic; instead, every new paragraph was denoted by an

elaborate, colorful ¶ (even if it fell in the middle of a line). These pilcrows were ornately drawn by specially trained scribes called rubricators and often added in red ink at the end of a manuscript's construction. If a rubricator was on deadline, he might choose to skip drawing the laborious pilcrows altogether—which is why, hundreds of years later, they have all but vanished from the page.

& Has a More Complex Meaning than You Think

You know when you see an & symbol (or ampersand) to pronounce it like the word *and*, but the word and the symbol aren't always interchangeable; the & symbol can denote a cozier relationship between two things. For example, have you noticed in movie credits that sometimes two names will be joined with an & and others with the word *and*? That's because the Writers Guild of America uses the & symbol to say two writers collaborated directly with each other, while the word *and* means the writers worked on the script individually, at separate times. & that's a wrap. **R**

Sources: smithsonianmag.com, *Mental Floss*, the *Guardian*, and *Shady Characters* by Keith Houston (W. W. Norton)

GREAT MOMENTS FOR SPORTS LEGENDS

“No one believed in us!” —unicorn football team coach

 @JOHNMOE

The first Ferris wheel, shown in this poster for the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, was 264 feet tall and could carry 2,160 people at once.



6 Things That Still Exist

BY COREY LEVITAN FROM LISTVERSE.COM

LIKE YOUR FIRST PET, your favorite bike, and your first kiss, there are some things you thought were gone forever. But these relics of yore have survived the march of time.

1 THE WORLD'S FAIR The World's Fair was once a huge deal, with attendance numbers

exceeding a third of the entire U.S. population. For the 1889 event, Paris built the Eiffel Tower. America answered in 1893 by debuting electric lighting and the Ferris wheel. Ice cream cones, dishwashers, the Ford Mustang, and the Space Needle all came to us in this way. Though the United States withdrew from the

Paris-based organizing body after a poorly attended fair in New Orleans in 1984, the fair is very much alive. The next one is this year, from May 1 to October 31, in Milan, Italy, and is expected to attract 29 million visitors.

2 TELEGRAMS

Though Western Union sent its last telegram in 2006, if you still want urgent news delivered to someone who isn't online, several companies—such as Telegram.us and American Telegram—have stepped in to fill the void. But sending a telegram today isn't cheap: Overnight delivery of a two-sentence message costs about \$20.

3 MILKMEN

In 1963, nearly 30 percent of American households had cow-to-door delivery. By 2005, only 0.4 percent had milk delivered to them. But the move toward natural, local food has lured dozens of farms (including Denver's Royal Crest Dairy, Washington State's Smith Brothers Farms, and Maryland's South Mountain Creamery) back into the old-timey practice. Some dairies even use glass bottles and employ drivers in white uniforms and caps, purely for nostalgic value.

4 TAB COLA

Tab was introduced in 1963, and the pink can was everywhere in the '60s and '70s, before its sweetener, saccharin, came under fire as

a possible carcinogen. Studies have since thrown these health concerns into doubt, and saccharin-sweetened Tab is still available on Amazon as well as at a few supermarkets. Its fan base is small—Coca-Cola produces just three million cases of Tab a year, compared with Diet Coke's 885 million, according to *Beverage Digest*—but ever thirsty.

5 THE STAR WARS SET

About 20 structures used to represent Luke Skywalker's home planet of Tatooine still stand in the Sahara Desert in Tunisia. Most were built for 1999's *The Phantom Menace*, but some date back to the original 1976 shoot. Alas, Tatooine is facing the ultimate phantom menace: A large sand dune, moving at a rate of two inches per day, is poised to swallow it whole within several years.

6 PAGERS

When almost everyone else moved on to cell phones, doctors kept their pagers. That's because cell phones are often prohibited around sensitive medical equipment. Also, recharging phones requires electricity, which may not be available in emergencies. In fact, the entire SMS cell phone system may be inaccessible during a catastrophe, which is why many firefighters and EMTs also favor pagers. (Now, if you see one wearing a fanny pack, that's another matter entirely.)



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Word Power

They say a good vocabulary is the foundation of learning. Master these terms related to architecture and construction, and you will build yourself a fine edifice. Answers on next page.

BY EMILY COX & HENRY RATHVON

1. raze ('rayz) *v.*—A: build up.
B: dig a foundation. C: tear down.

2. dexterous ('dek-ster-us) *adj.*—
A: skillful. B: left-handed.
C: turned clockwise.

3. jury-rig ('jur-ee-rig) *v.*—A: set up
permanently. B: construct in a
makeshift fashion. C: glaze.

4. stud ('stuhd) *n.*—A: slang for
a good carpenter. B: leveling bar.
C: upright post.

5. on spec (on 'spek) *adv.*—
A: using blueprints. B: without
a contract. C: ahead of schedule.

6. garret ('gar-it) *n.*—A: attic room.
B: pantry or extra kitchen room.
C: basement room.

7. annex ('a-neks) *n.*—A: supple-
mentary structure. B: underground
dwelling. C: foundation.

8. wainscot ('wayn-skoht) *n.*—
A: intricate plasterwork.
B: scaffolding. C: paneled part
of a wall.

9. rotunda (roh-'tun-duh) *n.*—
A: central column. B: circular room.
C: revolving door.

10. plumb ('plum) *adj.*—A: not
linked, as pipes. B: past its prime.
C: vertical.

11. aviary ('ay-vee-ehr-ee) *n.*—
A: house for birds. B: airport
terminal. C: open lobby.

12. corrugated ('kor-eh-gayt-ed)
adj.—A: with closed doors. B: rusted.
C: having a wavy surface.

13. mezzanine ('meh-zeh-noon)
n.—A: lowest balcony floor.
B: domed ceiling. C: marble counter.

14. cornice ('kor-nes) *n.*—A: meeting
of two walls. B: decorative top edge.
C: steeple or spire.

15. vestibule ('ves-teh-buyl) *n.*—
A: dressing room. B: lobby.
C: staircase.

 *To play an interactive version of Word Power on your iPad, download the Reader's Digest app.*

Answers

1. raze—[C] tear down. I hear they're going to *raze* the mall and build a greenhouse.

2. dexterous—[A] skillful. Charlotte spun her web with amazingly *dexterous* eight-handedness.

3. jury-rig—[B] construct in a makeshift fashion. The contractors were let go after they *jury-rigged* our home's first floor.

4. stud—[C] upright post. Don't start hammering the wall until you locate a *stud* behind it.

5. on spec—[B] without a contract. Dad is building the girls' dollhouse *on spec*.

6. garret—[A] attic room. I'm not fancy—a cozy *garret* is all I need to finish the novel.

7. annex—[A] supplementary structure. The children's *annex* was a welcome addition to the library.

8. wainscot—[C] paneled part of a wall. Marge's kids have treated the entire *wainscot* as an experimental crayon mural.

9. rotunda—[B] circular room. The conflicting blueprints for the *rotunda* have me going in circles!

10. plumb—[C] vertical. Our fixer-upper may need new floors, doors, and windows, but at least the walls are *plumb*.

11. aviary—[A] house for birds. "Your cat hasn't taken his eyes off that *aviary*," Sheryl noted.

12. corrugated—[C] having a wavy surface. All we have for a roof is a sheet of *corrugated* tin.

13. mezzanine—[A] lowest balcony floor. Sadly, our \$165 seats in the *mezzanine* had an obstructed view.

14. cornice—[B] decorative top edge. You're going to need one heck of an extension ladder to reach that *cornice*.

15. vestibule—[B] lobby. Anxiety peaking, Claire waited over an hour in the *vestibule* for her interview.

GARDEN VARIETY

A **trellis** is a structure of crisscross slats on which vines or flowers may climb. An **espalier** is a trellis often set against a flat wall. An **arbor** makes an arch of that trellis, and a **pergola** puts the trellis above a frame made of posts. If the structure's roof is solid instead, you have a **gazebo**. And if the gazebo is high on a hill, it may be called a **belvedere** (Italian for "beautiful view").

VOCABULARY RATINGS

9 & below: Homey
10–12: Grand
13–15: Palatial

Humor in Uniform



“WHY, YES, YOU DID STEP IN SOMETHING”

The India-Pakistan border is quite tense, and yet there hasn't been a major skirmish between the two countries in decades. After watching the high-kicking, gyrating Wagah ceremony, which marks the border's daily opening and closing, we think we know why: The soldiers are just too tired to fight.

Source: cracked.com

DURING THAT FIRST roll call in the Army, I waited in dread as the sergeant got to my name: DiFelicianantonio. There was bound to be trouble, and I was right, because suddenly, he fell silent—eyebrows arched, brain overloaded. After a long pause, he thundered, “The alphabet?!”

JOHN DIFELICIANTONIO,
Ventnor City, New Jersey

WHILE ON MANEUVERS in the Mojave Desert, our convoy got lost, forcing our lieutenant to radio for help. “Are you near any landmarks that

might help us locate you?” the base operator asked him.

“Yes,” said the lieutenant. “We are directly under the moon.”

JESSE JOE WINGO, *Gaylord, Michigan*

THE PENTAGON announced that its fight against ISIS will be called Operation Inherent Resolve. They came up with that name using Operation Random Thesaurus.

JIMMY FALLON

Send us your funniest military anecdote or news story—it might be worth \$100! Go to rd.com/submit for details.

Quotable Quotes



Self-pity will fulfill all the prophecies it makes and leave only itself. **STEPHEN FRY, actor**

Home lies in the things you carry with you everywhere and not the ones that tie you down. **PICO IYER, author**

CREATIVITY IS ALLOWING YOURSELF TO MAKE MISTAKES. ART IS KNOWING WHICH ONES TO KEEP.

SCOTT ADAMS, cartoonist

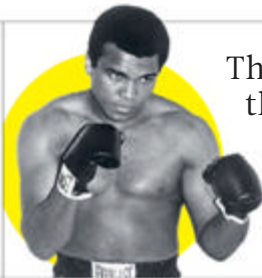
If we'd known we were going to be the Beatles, we'd have tried harder.

GEORGE HARRISON



Sometimes it's the people you can't help who inspire you the most. **MELINDA GATES**

EVEN IF YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK, YOU'LL GET RUN OVER IF YOU JUST SIT THERE. **WILL ROGERS**



The man who views the world at 50 the same as he did at 20 has wasted 30 years of his life.

MUHAMMAD ALI

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